The Meaning of Love

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The Meaning of Love

The Meaning of Love: Second Edition

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Dedication and Acknowledgements

Dedication

To my young daughters, Meghan and Lydia, in case you have questions in your future that might be helped by these ideas I have had in my past. May you and the friends you develop give each other joy, comfort, wisdom, strength, and compassion; and may you appreciate each other for doing so.

And to Karen, for whom love was first and most intensely reflected on; who brought out my best; and who set the standard for what love means to me.

In Appreciation

Lives cross and part, and the impressions they make on each other are not always known or expressed at the time. Many conversations, many, often fleeting, experiences with friends, acquaintances, and total strangers inspired the ideas in this book. I cannot name everyone who sparked those ideas or who aroused the feelings that led to them. Many names I never even knew; sometimes during long, intense conversations with strangers, we never introduced ourselves to each other by name. There are some people, though, whom I would now like to let know they did play special parts in creating these ideas.

Bonnie Best was the first person I met who verbalized concerns

about love, ethics, and sex. She and I had many interesting conversations in high school study hall when we were supposed to be studying about less interesting things. A warm and beautiful girl, she had a natural and instinctive gift for doing philosophy and psychology on a personal level about the dating experiences and emotions she had and had heard about from others.

Joan Droppers had one particularly special conversation with me at a very significant time in my life. I was, and am, most grateful for that conversation.

Jan Dixon, Jan Reid, and Leslie Shifron discussed insights, feelings, and concerns about people and about the subject of love that were very important.

Judy Salisbury Armstrong, Faith DeManicore, Nicky Peacock, and Nan Gallup are cherished friends that evoke a special, warm feeling of undemanding, gentle affection requiring no more than its own felt emotional bond

Judy Huckestein Trubiroha and Charlot Limberg are two very dear friends who, at one period, read what I had then written, listened to what I discovered, questioned what I thought, confirmed what they accepted, debated (sometimes for hours on end) what they disbelieved, fostered new ideas, and forced clearer language by emphatically pointing out what was unintelligible and vague or ambiguous. Especially at the beginning of my writing about these ideas, more of this was written in response to things they said more than any other single factor. I am not certain I have yet convinced either of them of all, or most of, the truths herein. If there are any mistakes in the work, I would like to hold them responsible for not changing my mind about them. Unfortunately, however, the mistakes will have to remain my responsibility.

I would also like to express appreciation here to the students I have taught who were interested enough in the subject of love from a philosophical standpoint to show me there was reason to write my ideas as a book. And to Katerina DiChiara whose persistent praise of the manuscript, and insistence it would benefit others, rekindled my

enthusiasm for making the book available to an audience, and who helped with the details to make that possible.

And always, there is appreciation to (and for) the girls and women I have loved or had crushes on, who taught me much about love and about myself, and who inspired many of these ideas, or provoked the need for them, in the first place. The people named above are not necessarily excluded from this category.

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Disclaimer

The beliefs expressed in the videos are not necessarily those of the author, and in some cases conflict with them. They are meant to provide an audio-visual introduction to the reading and spur critical thinking regarding topics within the chapter, and should be viewed with that intention in mind. The videos have been selected by the Troy University Center for Excellence in eTeaching as instructional aids. The point of the book is to encourage, inspire, demonstrate, and assist more systematic, thorough, logical, clear, and profound thinking about relationships and the concepts involved in them.

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A Note Concerning Grammar

Because it often sounds somewhat pretentious, it is often distractingly tedious to read, and sometimes prevents clarity, in many cases I have avoided the grammatically proper "one" or "he or she", "him or her", etc., and instead have used the technically improper, but more intelligible, "you" or "they" or "them" or "themself". For example: "If one is going to be jealous of his or her partner for dating another person whom he or she knew before he or she met him or her, then…," would simply be written as: "If you are going to be jealous of your partner for dating another person whom they met and dated before they met you, then…." This has the added benefit of not inadvertently introducing an unintended bias concerning gender of the subject when that bias is not warranted. It is difficult enough to avoid gender bias in writing or in reading without being further enticed by the grammatically correct, but socially arbitrary reference to "one" always as "he".

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Introduction

Introductory Chapter Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Identify the need for analysis of the concept of love.
- Explain the initial criteria the author proposes for identifying love.
- Compare and contrast the differences between a rational approach and other common approaches to discussing love and its characteristics.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to see how others define love.

Since people often disagree about what ***love*** is or what the word love means, I am proposing a usage that is meant to be clear and that is also meant to capture the important features of the varied ideas people now have about the subject.

The main point of this book will be that two people can be said to love each other when they, to some fair extent (or, in general)

(1) have feelings of attraction toward each other,

(2) satisfy (or enjoy) each other, particularly in areas of psychological importance (or meaningfulness), and

(3) are good for each other.

Love is stronger when:

(1) the feelings of attraction are stronger and/or occur more frequently,

(2) the satisfactions (or enjoyments) are greater and/or more frequent, or

(3) the two people are better for each other, or

(4) any two or three of the above are true –all this without there

being an equal or greater decline in one or more of the other categories.

The remainder of this book will explain these categories (feelings, enjoyments, and ethics) and their interrelationships more fully; it will explain why looking at love this way is a useful, accurate, and explanatory way of looking at loving, and other, relationships; and it will examine many of the past inaccurate, ignorant, and/ or harmful things that have been said about love and about other kinds of relationships, things which are still harming and confusing people today.

My approach to this subject is meant to be rational and logical, analytic and scrutinizing, not mystical, religious, poetic, or psychoanalytic. I will try to show clear and logical reasoning supporting my theories. Logic and emotions are not totally incompatible; though logic cannot be understood emotionally, emotions can be understood (in various degrees) and discussed logically.

Many clergymen, or fundamentally religious people, think people's intellect is limited in some of the areas I will address and that people should stick to the work and will of God in those areas as explained, say, in the Bible. But apart from even getting into questions about the origin and/or truth of the Bible, let me state here that religious interpretations of the Bible are often simply rationalizations of the interpreter's preconceived ideas anyway, often focusing on highly selective passages, or parts of passages, that give evidence for the interpreter's point while ignoring their contexts or while ignoring those other passages which might contradict that point. This enterprise makes use (or misuse) of intellect anyway. If the Bible is clear, no interpretations or explanations of it would be necessary. If it is not so clear, then explanation of it will rely on people's intellect every bit as much as logic and philosophy do. The fallibility of human intellect is not the sole province of secular humanists, philosophers, or scientists. To me, the reasonableness of what is said is more important for determining its truth, probability, or plausibility than its source of

inspiration, and it is to people who sympathize with that approach for whom this book will have meaning, even where they disagree with what I say for reasons they will be able to produce themselves.

Now it is impossible to give a complete list and criticism of ignorant or erroneous things said about love or about aspects of relationships, such as the sexual aspect. It seems there is something new, or something old resurrected in new form, every time you hear a new speaker or read a new work on the topic. On television one night, a born-again Christian made the correct observation that one's being in the mood for sex did not therefore give him or her a license for immediate sex, even with a spouse, if the spouse was not in the mood and could not subtly be put into the mood [or, if I might add, there were some other reason it might be inappropriate].

However, the speaker erroneously drew or implied the conclusion that one could only gain such an insight into sexual morals by loving Christ and accepting Him into your life as personal savior. Only through being a Christian, and definitely by being a Christian, he was sure, could one learn to control one's sexual desires and learn to respect one's mate's feelings. Surely though, this is false, since many have such knowledge and respect without accepting fundamentalist Christian doctrine and since there are many sexually ignorant or insensitive persons who do accept Christ as their savior, and who might cite 1 Corinthians 7:3,4 to prove sex on demand or request is a duty: "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does."

Disagreeing with the above speaker is not to deny that sexual urges may sometimes be more easily put off when it is for values believed more important – such as religious values or principles. But that does not mean such sublimation or denial is always good or right, nor that it is always possible or easy, nor that there might not be causes, values, beliefs or reasons other than religious ones to help harness or better channel one's sexual energy when that

is appropriate. This particular speaker was justifiably attacking (what Rollo May calls) the "new Puritanism" (May, 1969, p. 45) which says you must always have sex when you or your partner want it, that performance is required for virtue, and that there is never any good reason not to have sex when the urge demands. But he seemed to want subtly to replace it with a form of the old Puritanism, not only showing selfish sexual activity in marriage to be improper, but also then sliding into other born-again Christian views such as the claim that even consenting sex between unmarried persons, is wrong or bad. The old Puritanism and the new Puritanism support the adage that a physics teacher of mine once said seemed to be a law of (human) nature: if something is not forbidden, it will probably be required. I hope that the analysis in this book, along with the examples of errors I do point out, will enable the readers be better able to detect on their own those errors I do not either mention or foresee.

It seems that despite the large number and high popularity of books and of magazine and newspaper articles concerning love and personal relationships, few people seem to have very feasible and reasonable ideas about the subject. There are probably at least three reasons for this: (1) too little thought at all by some people about relationships; (2) a high percentage of error in what is written; and (3) poor analysis of what is written and said.

Concerning (3), poor analysis: often this is due to hasty and unreflective reading; and it is easy to find even quite intelligent people who, after just having read a book they claim to "like", can do little to tell you what specifically it said or what the author's main ideas were, let alone whether they were reasonable or not. Enjoying or liking a book seems often to be related more to enjoying the author's style than to analyzing it for truth or reasonableness. There is little analysis or growing body of constructive dialogue building on what is written. I would hope that people who read this book would rationally analyze and respond to it, so that a rational and constructive popular dialogue could begin with knowledge in this area then progressively growing.

Concerning (1), there are some who do not read or think about love or personal relationships at all—those who say there is nothing to think about, that nature will take its course or that when you meet the one you love, you will know it and you will then know what love is. (I hope such people do not meet the one they first love after drinking curdled milk; it would be terrible to go through life mistaking nausea or ptomaine for romance.) But given the number of relationships that come to an unhappy ending, and given the numbers of people who thought they were once in love but now are not sure they ever were, that answer seems hardly true; and at any rate, it is unenlightening to those with questions. I think we can do much better. For there are a number of questions that people have, such as how to tell whether a particular attraction is love or infatuation or whether it is just physical or just good friendship, or whether it is the result of, or dependent upon, some unusual, perhaps temporary, circumstance such as loneliness, rebound, grief, frustration, tension, anxiety, or disappointment. (At college, it always seems so many couples fall in love or "find" each other just before final exam time that it could hardly be just coincidence. Is then the probable future durability of these romances something to consider with suspicion?) And many people still consider physical contact, however innocent or harmless (such as kissing or hand-holding), and its relationship to love to be a problem— wondering whether one ought to love the one kisses or sleeps with or dates repeatedly, wondering whether there are any good reasons to marry first before sex of any degree or even to love first, wondering just how marriage and love should be related, if at all, wondering whether there are any reasons to have any kind of physical contact of a romantic sort or any reasons not to have such physical contact with any particular person at a particular time (even spouses) or not. These are just a few questions many people have, often (as a student of mine once said) particularly when a relationship that was important to them has just ended badly.

However, I once had one student who seemed typical of many people who do not, or who do not want to, question anything about

relationships and who often stifle inquiry by those who do. She said: "Why should I worry about it? My dating has been all right." Perhaps her dating or love life will always be all right. Perhaps she may never want to verbalize or intellectualize about just what makes it so. Perhaps, in matters of personal relationships, she has a sixth sense or a natural ability, like a "natural" athlete or musician who can perform well but who does not know how or why, at least not on a verbal level. Alternatively, perhaps she has just been lucky…so far.

Or perhaps she is mistaken. Perhaps her relationships are not so good as she believes. Perhaps she tends to not see the parts that are not so good, particularly the parts that may not be so good for the other person. Or perhaps she tends to simply not notice or just to forget about relationships or parts that aren't quite so good or so meaningful. Or perhaps she notices them but dismisses them as not worth worrying about because she thinks they are a natural part of life—not anything to trouble over and not anything that can be solved. She might feel that you cannot love everybody or get along well with everybody, or that even in the best relationships, problems arise, but that is nothing to cause any great concern. Perhaps she is somewhat dissatisfied and does not even know it or know why or think there is anything that can be done about it. Dissatisfaction can be so constant or so prevalent that it seems normal, or even ideal. Comic Sam Levensen said of his mother's Jewish cooking (lots of onions and/or garlic) that it was not until he went to college that he learned heartburn was not normal. How many women not too long ago thought sex was not supposed to be enjoyable for them, and that if they did enjoy it, something was therefore wrong with them? How many people live the poet's "lives of quiet desperation", never even realizing that life shouldn't be that way and that there is something that could be done about it. I believe that though much of love springs "from the heart" (from emotions), it is often or usually important to understand the heart (emotions) so that it will not run away with your head. Often, such understanding will even prevent a heart from being unnecessarily and regrettably broken. Emotions

are only a part, not the whole, of what makes behavior reasonable and right.

Concerning (2), many books and articles flood the market, but few are good. Many of the newspaper and magazine articles and columns, for reasons of quick entertainment or limitations of space, give brief, cryptic, and often preconceived, purely fashionable answers to people's problems about which the authors may not even have sufficient relevant facts to offer sound advice. Few give the reasons or evidence for the reasonableness or wisdom of their views.

With regard to books, even serious books, many start with some notion of people based on a general psychological theory of their nature—often a notion that is so problematic, suspicious or general to begin with that it is difficult to tell whom it fits, if anyone. These books then go on to expound a theory of relationships based upon that theory of human nature—rather than being gathered from experience—and insofar as experience does not fit the theory, it is ignored by the author, or is considered to be abnormal, aberrant, or irrelevant.

For example, some, trying to argue that sex without love is always dissatisfying (since people, unlike the lower animals, are emotional creatures "needing" love) point to many different people for whom this might be true, and either ignore the people and cases where it at least appears not to be true, or perhaps dismiss them as having only ephemeral physical pleasures, or the pleasures of a neurotic who mistakes physical satisfaction for the true contentment of love which he or she is unwilling and/or unable to seek or to give. Others may argue that since people are just animals in regard to physical pleasures and since sex is a physical pleasure, that there then needs to be no overriding emotion nor binding commitment behind it. These authors then dismiss as simple, culturally conditioned victims, people who cannot just enjoy sex for fun and physical pleasure alone. But neither type of account is reasonable about, or fair to, the subjects who do not fit the theory. Neither is being

helpful to most people in explaining what sort of aspect sex is in a relationship. And neither is being very helpful in explaining the relationship of sex to passion, emotion, happiness, or the good in life.

The first fails to recognize that ephemeral pleasures are, after all, still pleasures and that few pleasures, even that of completing a great task, last long anyway. Of course, one can conjure up joy at their memory, but so can one conjure up joy at the memory of a particular affair, if it was in fact joyful and good or right – which is the question in the first place. The second fails to recognize that people have certain emotional, intellectual, and moral capacities that lower animals do not have, and that some of these capacities may, at least sometimes, have an important bearing on a person's (otherwise physical) experiences. Though some animal behavior might be well for us to copy or return to, it is unlikely all of it is. I do not want to live in a cave, forego the use of tools, and continuously have to forage for food. Not even all natural human instincts are desirable. The fact we have animal instincts and are capable of animal pleasures does not necessarily mean those are the right instincts or pleasures to pursue. The case must be made not only that humans have instincts and the capabilities for experiencing certain pleasures, but that any particular instincts and pleasures at issue are good ones to pursue.

To deem a person neurotic solely on the basis of his/her pleasure in sex without love, or on the basis of his/her not having pleasure in sex without love, is to beg the question in a psychologically name-calling manner with little profit in understanding.

Also, the first theory has a further problem. For even if it is true that man needs love, it hardly necessarily follows that he therefore needs it with sex – any more than it follows he therefore needs it with dinner or with golf or with doing algebra, climbing mountains, or performing surgery. To need love is not necessarily to need it every minute, nor with every activity, nor with all sex, any more than to need nutrition means that one needs only nutritious food

every minute, or that one cannot sometimes abstain from food or eat less nutritious foods on occasion just because they taste good and provide the ephemeral pleasures they do. I am not arguing here that sex is ever or always good or better without love or that love is never important for sex to be good. I only wish to say here that I think there are many more specific and intelligent ways to approach this area and many more (and more accurate) things we can (and will) say about the relationship of sex and love, and the relationship of sex with other aspects of life, than that sex without love is empty because people are creatures that need love, or that sex without love is rewarding because people, like other animals, can have physical pleasure without emotional overtones or commitment.

There are also some works on the market concerning love and personal relationships that put great stock in what the ancients thought (without examining the arguments supporting those thoughts) or in the meaning of myths or words and phrases coined long ago and evolving over the centuries. But in the absence of any (independent) reason to believe the ancient Greeks (or whoever) were right about relationships, there is no more reason to accept any of their unsupported ideas about them than there is to accept their ideas about physics or medicine simply because they also held them. Even the "wisdom of the ages," as enshrined in myths or the evolution of words, is not necessarily rational nor correct. Superstition, specific cultural values, philosophical theories, and religious beliefs creep into mythological tales and into language development and may themselves be irrational or incorrect. This is not to deny the potential value of looking at what the past has said about relationships, but only to advise against accepting it without scrutiny to make certain that it is correct or reasonable and not merely historically interesting.

Another popular theme is that people and their relationships should be governed by natural law; but only certain cases are chosen for which this is claimed to be applicable. Some writers condemn artificial birth control methods because they are not

natural, yet most such writers do not condemn the use of (artificial) medicine in order to save lives (or to produce life, such as in artificial insemination) simply because it is artificial. Nor would many writers, I suspect, want us to live like primitive people or jungle animals as far as our living conditions or our eating or toilet habits and other everyday aspects of life are concerned. It is certainly not natural to eat food with silverware rather than hands, nor, I suspect, is it natural to cook food before eating it or refrigerate it to prevent spoilage, shower periodically with soap, live in comfortable, heated homes, use anesthetics in surgery, cultivate crops, or any of hundreds of things we do that are arguably far better than the natural alternatives would be. Certainly nature can be a great teacher, and certainly it is bad to go against some natural inclinations or instincts; but nature is not the only teacher, and the question is always whether any particular way of nature is better to be followed or to be modified or to be shed. Since we have justifiably left nature behind in many areas (medicine, for example), it can hardly be argued in any given case that nature's way is the best just because it is nature's way. And this is not even to use the available argument that it is human nature to be rational and to invent, discover, and use "artificial" things and methods in life and that, therefore the use of such things and methods is natural after all.

Other writers may not refer to a theory of people or the whole world of nature, yet refer to specific animal behavior to exemplify or argue a point about people. Rollo May, for example, in *Love and Will* speaks of the death of the drone bee after copulation and of the decapitation of the male praying mantis by his mate during copulation and her ensuing eating of his corpse as examples of what he considers to be a close connection – that between love and death. The fact that there are billions of animals, including humans, that do not act this way seems of little consequence to Dr. May.

In this book, I too will generalize sometimes about people, but with regard to the kinds of specific ideas that individual readers

should easily be able to verify as to whether they accurately apply to themselves or not. I will also, in some cases, be writing about my own personal tastes or those of certain groups of people. I will try to make it clear when I am generalizing and when I am not; but I realize that is not always possible, since it is far too easy to unintentionally and incorrectly generalize about mankind from one's own limited experience. However, apart from offering what I think are well-supported ideas about particular aspects of relationships, this book is meant to do three other things that are also of importance. The most significant is to offer a framework for looking at relationships—so that even if I am incorrect about any particular things I say about relationships the overall *way* of looking at relationships will still be most helpful to people. Second, I am trying to popularize looking at relationships and their components in a rational way by showing *how*, and by showing that much insight, perspective, and knowledge can be gained this way, often while looking at ordinary experiences open to all and common to many. Finally, I am trying to show the kinds of issues that I think need to be addressed, and the kinds of problems that need to be solved, even if my particular answers about them can be proven incorrect.

Concerning the framework that I will be presenting, though some of my particular ideas about relationships have changed since I first formulated my basic view on the subject, this framework has remained the same. It has helped me view and understand relationships more clearly and coherently, and it has helped me see what the possibilities, as well as the problems, are in relationships. By using this framework, I believe it is easier to spot, and often to solve, specific problems in relationships.

This does not mean that by using my framework all relationship or marital problems will be or can be solved. Knowing a problem is not necessarily the first step in solving it. Knowing one has some incurable disease is not the first step toward cure. There are many problems, whether in mathematics, medicine, history, crime, relationships, etc., that seem to have no reasonably attainable solution, even though the problem is well specified. If two people

are incompatible in some way and neither is willing to change or to accept the other's behavior as it is, it might be impossible for the relationship to continue as a fully active, loving one. Having a framework that helps one understand relationships better can help identify and solve problems, but it is no guaranty it will help identify and solve all of them.

What I mean by a rational approach to the subject is not just voicing unsupported opinion, but giving evidence for the things I say – evidence that is readily available to most people to verify or disconfirm. This does not, by the way, mean appealing unquestioningly to an authority, particularly one whose pronouncements seem to be at odds with experience. If my ideas are wrong, then there must also be something wrong with the reasons I give as evidence for them; and if progress is to be made in the area of relationships, people need to learn to show specifically just what is wrong with other people's reasoning instead of just arbitrarily dismissing disagreeable conclusions and replacing them with unsupported opinions of their own. The rational approach to a topic does not mean just dismissing differing views – as one writer on another topic in a professional journal dismissed quite reasonable, substantial, and devastating criticisms of his work by others as being simply "contentious, wordy, and irresponsible" without responding to their specific criticisms.

In this book I will try to be as clear as possible, give as much evidence for my views as possible, and give evidence that everyone can understand, appreciate, and confirm or deny. I will also give numerous examples from everyday life, from literature, and from movies and television – not to prove my points with such examples, but to illustrate and further explain them. This is not a book that will require any special training or knowledge to read or to analyze. I doubt that I will ultimately be telling any new facts to people who have had normal experience with relationships, or given much thought to them; but I expect to be putting those facts into a new order and perspective that will shed previously unseen light on

them and on the meaning they have for us in our relationships with others.

Key Takeaways

- Love can be analyzed and understood rationally even if it or the common concept of it involves emotions or feeling that are themselves not always rational.

Key Terms

- ***Love*** can be said to involve feelings, joys, and good ethical qualities.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question:*** What are the components of love?

Chapter 1 Personal Versus Professional Relationships

Chapter 1 Learning Objectives:

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Recognize that whether a relationship is personal or professional does not necessarily determine which acts are right or wrong within it.

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The distinction is usually made between ***personal relationships*** and professional ones. I think it is an unimportant distinction for improving one's relationships with other people. I shall make little use of it, since I believe that anything one might want to cover under professional ethics or professionally proper behavior will also fall under the more general category simply of ethical behavior or proper behavior. I will dwell more on this in the chapter on ethics. Let me just say for now that ***professional relationships*** between people,simply because they are between people, are also then personal relationships, though they may be of a different, or more or less involved, scope than one's normally considered personal relationships. That is, one may see one's doctor for only thirty minutes, say once a year, but see a friend more. One might appear disrobed in front of a doctor but not in front of a friend.

These kinds of differences are made right or feasible because of what is involved in the relationship, not because it is a professional or social relationship as such. For example, if a person has medical

knowledge and the proper degrees (for legal purposes) but chooses not to practice medicine professionally (chooses not to make a living from it), it would be just as right for her or him to examine the unclothed anatomy (for health reasons) of another as it would be for a professional doctor. With the proper knowledge, even without the proper degrees, it might be right in some sort of emergency situation. The "right-making" characteristics involved in the action here are the patient's consent, and the proper knowledge of the examiner, and the proper use of that knowledge in this particular situation, not whether the relationship is professional or not. A doctor does not have the right to make sexual advances toward a nude patient, not because it is unprofessional (that is a result of its being wrong, not a cause), but because the patient is not, by being nude for a medical examination, thereby giving consent for sexual license, is not expecting it, is likely to be offended, scared or embarrassed because of it, and is in a disconcertingly vulnerable state for such an advance (or virtual attack).

Likewise, though an employer may angrily chew out an employee for an error of some sort, it seems to me this act is only right if the employee deserves it due to his prior character faults and if this is the least harmful way of curbing or curing those faults. The chewing out is warranted only if it is deserved and/or is the least damaging way of correcting the situation or preventing recurrences. It is not made right because employers should be able to treat employees any way they want (they shouldn't be) and therefore in a different manner from the way they treat friends. If a person should be chewed out, then it might be right for an employer, friend, mother, or, in some cases, even a stranger to do it. And if the chewing out is undeserved, or unfair, then it is wrong for anyone, including the employer, to do it.

Different Kinds of Professional Relationships

There are a number of different kinds of relationships that may be described as professional or derived from professional sources. There are employer-employee relationships, say between a dentist and a dental assistant he employs, or between a store owner and clerk. There are relationships of service like these, but where a third party does the employing– for example, a secretary and boss who both work for a corporation. There are relationships of service which are of more temporary durations, such as doctor-patient, lawyer-client, student- teacher, salesman- customer, barber-client, photographer-subject, etc.

There are also professional relationships which are not based on a servant-boss type of distinction, but on a more equal basis; for example, people working together in an area or profession who come together because of their profession or place of work – say different secretaries of equal rank, different executives of equal rank, or different clerks of equal rank working in the same company; different teachers at the same school.

In short, a person's job may bring her or him into contact with somebody they work for or who works for them (either through direct employment or a third party's), and a person's job might bring them into contact with people they work with but whom they neither supervise nor are supervised by. Some of these relationships might be intended for a long duration; others for short, one time, or occasional periods.

Now there are different legal, organizational, and company stipulations concerning professional relationships and conduct. For example, two people making a contractual business agreement thereby have legal obligations (and enforcing sanctions) the usual friendly agreement does not have. (But a friendly agreement is just as morally binding as a business agreement. Both need to be honored unless special circumstances arise allowing either agreement to be rightfully dissolved.) Or, say, a doctor has the

obligation to report to the police gunshot wounds of patients, an obligation that the patients' friends do not have. Examples of organizational restrictions are those posed by, say, a Bar Association or AMA group on its member lawyers or doctors, or by the U.S. Congress on its members whereby punishment for breaches might involve censure, loss of certain privileges, or expulsion from membership. Companies or boards may have rules concerning proper conduct for employees, such as conduct for teachers toward their students or supervisors.

In some instances, there may be conflicting obligations from different relationships – a person's company may want him/her to keep secret the impending firing of a co-worker that might be his/her spouse or spouse's close relative. This puts the person in an ethical dilemma for which there may be no easy solution. But this could be just as true if the co-worker were simply a friend or acquaintance one respected at work. There could be similar business or professional dilemmas not involving personal relationships at all, nor even involving harming the business by disobedience to its policies. For instance, situations might arise in business where important opportunities for your company could be lost if you followed company policy. (This is sometimes true in war too for a soldier faced with whether to do something he believes is beneficial to the military and his country if it means having to disobey military regulations to do it.) The decisions you make in any of these kinds of cases are always ethical ones, since you always have the choice whether to follow policy or to ignore it. That is the primary decision, and it has to be made on grounds outside of the policy itself. You have to first decide whether policy is right in a particular instance or not. Further, there can be conflicting totally personal obligations. You do not have to look to business to find such problems. People often have to choose between courses of action that will upset or disappoint either their spouse or their parents, or their spouse or children.

I am not denying there are legal and organizational distinctions

between personal and professional relationships; I am only denying that the distinction between personal and professional relationships is of any use as such in understanding the relationships we have in our lives, and I am denying that the distinction and the legal and institutional rules or codes are of much use in determining our real ethical obligations or describing correct conduct toward others (which is a large aspect of the relationships we have with others). Some are not even good ethics; and some only serve the group, not the public. They are misnamed as ethics, and instead should be called sanctioned practices. This latter claim will be further supported in the chapter dealing with ethics. It is, I maintain, easier and more useful and beneficial to think of all relationships between people as being personal relationships, with some having special circumstances (whether for personal or business reasons) that may make them different from others in terms of the behavior, thoughts, and feelings that are psychologically or ethically appropriate. A dentist treats us differently from a doctor, CPA, or television repairman, not because they are not all professionals, but because their professions and their expertise (what we call on them for) are different. Well, similarly we can find reasons as to why our relationships with our mother, our mother-in-law, and our spouse are different from each other and different from our relationships with our doctor and our tv repairman without having to say only that the latter are professional and the former are not.

Key Takeaways

- All relationships, whether professional or not are also personal.
- Something wrong to do to someone is not made right by the relationship's being a professional one.

Key Terms

- ***Professional relationships*** are those involving acts done as part of at least one person's business, even if one does not charge money for it. It often involves acts requiring a licensed professional.
- ***Personal relationships*** are those in which acts generally are not based on business or commercial transactions or on the profession of one or more participants.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question:*** What do you think are some differences and some similarities between personal and professional relationships?
- ***Question:*** What are the potential characteristics of all relationships between people?

Chapter 2 Love, Some Popular Views

Chapter 2 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Identify what the popular views of love typically are and the problems associated with those views.

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It has been said that love is that wonderful feeling you will know the instant you have it; that when you fall in love, you will know it. It has been said that love is the solution to the problem of man's alienation from himself, from others, and from the world. That love is aim-inhibited sex. That love is the result of an act of will. That love is the spirit that draws man's soul to the heights of truth, beauty, and goodness, and makes him be like the gods. That God is love. That love is holding hands. That love is the power that illumines men's actions, but so often also plunges them into darkest despair.

All the above sound not unlike the self-styled descriptions of concoctions sold by nineteenth century medicine men as they hawked their wares to the multitudes. This wonderful elixir picks you up from dropsy, perks you up on those dull, lifeless days, gets you rolling again when you can otherwise hardly stand; it lets insomniacs find blissful sleep, but miraculously also shakes off drowsiness for those who need to be alert. It is unlike anything else ever invented. Its taste is distinctive. The moment you try it, you know it works. It will let you charm your enemies and love your

friends more steadfastly, and it will even help you enter the gates of heaven if you should die, which is unlikely if you drink it as a daily tonic.

Love has been described as involving care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge by Erich Fromm in *The Art of Loving*. Rollo May says there have been four types of love in Western tradition (page 37 of *Love and Will*)– sex or lust; *eros*, the creative drive; *philia* or friendship; and *agape*, the love devoted toward the welfare of others. And far too often, I am afraid, love has been thought of as one (or, as above, four) static kind(s) of thing(s), the same or similar for all people and for all time. Love seems to be regarded as something that you either have or feel or that you do not. You are either in love or you are not. There may be slight variations on this theme, but there is only one theme, and it is supposedly basic.

But I think all this is wrong. Love is not described by telling what it can do, any more than water or Dr. John's soothing snake oil is described by telling what it does–cures thirst or melancholy. Telling what something does is not to explain what it **is**. To say, for example, that the heart pumps blood and that blood transports oxygen and carbon dioxide is not to tell someone, who does not already know, what the heart or blood actually are. And I will contend later that there is no one set of ingredients of love – that it is different at different times, for different people, and often for the same person at different times, in different circumstances. What it feels like to love is not a similar kind of question to what it feels like to have an itch; it is more like the question of what it feels like to breathe. But the question of what it feels like to breathe does not just have one answer. It feels different to breathe when you have a knot in your chest than when you don't. It feels different when you have run further than you are in condition to, or when you have a mouthful of crackers, or when you are laughing so hard your ribs ache, or when you feel terror or pride or after you have been under water a bit too long. And, most of the time, and when your mind is on other things, it does not feel like anything at all, because you do not literally feel it.

Likewise, how it feels to love when you are doing dishes or scrubbing floors or running a mile or having intercourse or reading a book or taking an exam or kissing for the first time someone you have silently, secretly, and shyly worshiped a long time, or saying "I do" at the alter, or attending a funeral or feeling guilt or terror or contentedly watching your loved one sleep by your side, or feeling pride, performing surgery, or drowning are very different kinds of things. And this is true whether you are talking about love for a spouse of fifty years, love for a first girlfriend (boyfriend), a spouse on a honeymoon, a son or brother, or clergyman who has been kind in a time of need, your favorite aunt, favorite elementary school teacher, the newest Hollywood (or office) sex symbol, and maybe even your love for pizza. And this is only about how it feels to love; yet I will argue later that love is more than just a (kind of) feeling anyway.

But all this is not to say that love is so unique for different people, or at different times, that nothing of general importance and description can be said about it. Though love is a variety of things and involves a variety of things, the varieties themselves can be meaningfully explained and described, and they can be explained and described simply in terms of everyday experience rather than described away in scientific (or pseudo-scientific) jargon or theory. And though they can be described in specific, accurate, logical, non-mystical and non-mythical prose which will make reflection, decision, and discussion of love easier and clearer, this will not thereby make love seem prosaic. And it may even heighten both the value of love itself and the meaning, poignancy, and perception poetry about it provides.

Let me first explain, however, that I am not so interested in talking about how the word love is used as in talking about how it should be used, since it is used so differently by so many different people that it is virtually impossible to convey a particular idea to someone else just by using the word. In this regard, it might almost even be better to abandon the word altogether, except that it has such a rich

heritage of usage, can serve a useful purpose, is as convenient as any that might be coined in its place, and in many previous contexts can be understood in terms of the analysis I will give. What I am going to do is to try to capture and combine the essences of what people mean, try to mean, or seem to mean by the word "love" in a way that will be representative and significant, yet be more specific, accurate, and helpful. In many cases, however, I think people will in fact find it clearer, more accurate, and more useful to think and talk in the terms of the specific components (such as amounts and kinds of feelings, satisfactions, and goodness) that I use to analyze love and other relationships than to use the more encompassing, but more general and vague, word "love" by itself.

In a survey of college students reported in J. Richard Udry's *The Social Context of Marriage* (Udry, 1966, p. 177), 40% believed love was a feeling or kind of attraction and said things like: "Love represents a magnetic attraction between two persons." "Love is a feeling of high emotional affiliation…which sends a person's ego to dizzying heights." "Love is the emotional feeling two people receive when they both have sexual and Platonic love in the proper proportions." Still, another 20% thought love had more to do with companionship and compatibility, and they said things like: "Love is the physical and mental compatibility of two people." "Love is the end result of a mature union of two compatible personalities." "Love is helping the other person whenever he needs it…being his companion. It's having common goals, dreams, and ambitions." "Love is doing things together and liking it." Still another 20% thought of love in terms of "giving": "Love is giving–time, understanding, yourself." "Love is to give of oneself to another." "Love is giving trust." "Love is a give and take relationship– and mostly give." And 17% responded they thought of love in terms of security: "Love is having security in being wanted and knowing you have someone to rely on." "When a person is in love, the world is right and a person has security." Finally, 3% looked at love in terms of efficiency, practicality, or roles: "Love for the girl is cooking for him, washing his clothes and keeping the home in order. For the man it is providing security, safety, and

helping his wife." "Love to me is ***faithfulness*** to my mate and caring for our children."

I list the results of this survey to show people do use the word differently, though it is easy to prove this yourself simply by asking a few friends how they use the word "love" or what it means to them; you will quickly see a wide difference. Or tell your parents you love someone you know they disapprove of and see how quickly they try to show you what you have is not love for that person but hero worship, infatuation, sexual longings (being in lust or in heat, not in love), rebellious disrespect for your parents, or whatever.

I would like to take the opportunity to show, rather briefly for now, what is wrong with thinking of love as any of the categories in the above survey, and thereby to show some of the kinds of things a correct or useful theory of love must take into account and thus explain or consider.

If love were the kind of feeling mentioned, then how long should it last, how intense should it be, and how frequently should it occur? If the feeling someday goes away, never or rarely to return, was it really love? If infatuation is also that dizzying kind of feeling, how can one tell the difference between love and infatuation? If love is a feeling and if we have little control over what feelings we have, then what sense could there be in promising eternal love, long lasting love, or even love through tomorrow? That would seem more a prediction than a promise. If you have to wait to see how long and/or under what conditions the feeling of love lasts in order to tell whether it is truly love or not, then don't you have to wait for that time or those conditions before you can honestly tell someone you love them?

If love is the kind of compatibility mentioned, then it would seem that all friends were lovers, that people at work who got along well together and helped each other pursue common ends, etc., were lovers, and that, in general, there is little difference between good friendship and love. Further, it would mean two people could not be in love if they had different goals or joys, even thought they

might get along perfectly well together and have great fondness for each other. I am not sure what is even meant by physical and mental compatibility. Cannot big people love smaller people; bright people, less bright people; intellectuals love athletes; and vice versa. And if by physical compatibility is meant sexual compatibility, then aren't there millions of potential loves for any normal person, since I doubt there is that much sexual incompatibility in the world. "Love is giving" is a popular theme– many sermons in church find this a fond message, usually coupled with some prescription like each person should give 110% or that in most marriages, it is 60/40 (then everyone believes they are the ones giving 60 and getting 40). If giving, though, means being considerate, nice, ethical, doing the right thing, etc., then since we should all be that way anyhow; so does that mean we should all be lovers to each other! It is not clear that giving applies only or specifically to love situations. And if it means always or mostly being altruistic or self- sacrificing, then, as I will argue in the ethics chapter, it is a bad principle. Ethics does not demand self- denial in all, or even most, cases.

I am also not certain what it means to "give" trust, though I assume it means "trusting." However, we certainly do not always trust children we love to stay out of danger or trouble. And certainly we may not really trust our teenager with driving for the first time–though we may believe showing confidence in him or her is better to do than not to, even if that is to risk a minor accident. And at the adult level, one may not always trust one's loved one (or even one's self) to say or do the right thing in various situations, yet one goes forward anyway and simply does not fret over any bad result. For example, minor though it is, one may not trust one's spouse to make a crucial put-away tennis shot, but it is often better to let the spouse try than to hog the court, because giving him or her the chance or allowing him or her to try is more important than winning some particular point or match. That is not giving trust, however. And it may have more to do with ethical behavior in general anyway. Further, there are certainly people that we trust,

that we do not love – some baby sitters, housekeepers, doctors, businessmen, teachers, etc.

Security: being in love certainly does not make the world all right or make all your troubles disappear; just think of loving when one is incurably ill, or think of loving under war conditions or bad economic conditions where it is difficult even to get food or safe shelter. There are many situations in which loved ones are powerless to help one another, and the inability to help a love one in trouble often causes more distress or agony than does the inability to help a stranger. Love certainly does not always bring peace of mind or security.

Faithfulness seems to be a question related to ethics more than only to love, particularly the ethics of sex (generally), about which I will have more to say later; and child care, cooking, etc., seems to have more to do simply with having domestic help of some sort (maid, nanny, butler, valet, whatever) than anything specifically related to love.

Some of the things a successful definition or analysis of love must do then is to allow us some way to distinguish between love and friendship, between love and infatuation, between love and unwarranted sacrifice, between love and every day ethical concern for others, between love and "just" sexual or physical attraction, between love and comfort, and between love and an efficient household. I think such an analysis is possible.

Key Takeaways

- Realizing that the concept of love is more complex than most people think and that it needs to be analyzed and understood at a deeper level.

Key Terms

- ***Faithfulness*** seems to be a question related to ethics more than only to love.

Chapter Review Question

- ***Question:*** What do you think love is, particularly what is often referred to as romantic love – love of the sort people seek for marriage or intimate relationships – as opposed to brotherly love, family love, or love of humanity? Explain and justify your answer.
- ***Question***: What are the specific components you should consider when defining love?
- ***Question:*** What are examples of people that we trust but may not love?

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Chapter 3 The Three Important Aspects of Relationships

Chapter 3 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Recognize that all relationships involve 1) emotion aspects (attractions or dislike, in various degree), 2) satisfaction/dissatisfaction aspect, and 3) an ethical aspect (i.e., how good or bad acts are (specifically and in general) for each partner in the relationship.
- Explain how each of the three relationship aspects listed above vary in degree or strength.

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Every relationship has the potential to involve (1) ***emotional aspect*** or feeling aspects, (2) ***satisfaction or dissatisfaction aspects***, and (3) good or bad (that is, ethical) aspects.

There is an overlap here since satisfactions, to the extent they are pleasurable sensations, are both feelings and good things; dissatisfactions are feelings and bad things. But I want to make and use these distinctions because I want to be able to talk about the ***ethical aspects of relationships*** over and above their joys and dissatisfactions since many things may be both enjoyable and harmful, enjoyable in terms of pleasurable sensations but harmful in terms of side- effects, consequences, or some other relevant factor. For example, satisfying sex that results in an unwanted pregnancy or disease. Similarly, some very unpleasant things may result in great good, such as ill- tasting medicine. (This is not to say that all ethics involves only harm and benefit, but that will be explained in detail in the ethics chapter. A sufficient example of that for now is the nature of the obligation to keep a promise or appointment even

though doing so might not cause as much pleasure as breaking it would.) I want to keep the above distinctions also because I want to give ample consideration to satisfactions and dissatisfactions since they form perhaps the most noticeable or visible part of ethics, relationships, and life. Finally, I want to make the distinction between joys and other kinds of feelings because I am especially interested in some of those other kinds, particularly feelings of attraction.

I believe that these three categories—feelings, satisfactions, and ethics—can profitably be considered separately, even though often they do not occur separately in life. I further believe that these categories involve most, if not all, of the significant aspects of any relationship, and that most of the important things concerning relationships will involve one, two, or all three of these categories.

I believe the clearest, most useful, most helpful way of speaking and thinking about relationships is to separate talking about those (1) between people who have feelings (of attraction) for each other, (2) between people who satisfy or give (significant) joy to each other, and (3) between people who are good for each other. This way of speaking separates relationships on the basis of the above three categories and allows more clarity of communication. For example, a parent might be able to explain more clearly to his daughter why he disapproves of her going with or becoming engaged to a particular boy by saying, "I know you are attracted to each other and enjoy each other a lot, but I do not believe that you satisfy each other in enough areas that the relationship will stay a happy one very long because…." This is a far preferable basis for discussion of the situation than "You don't really love that boy; you just think you do; you're too young to even know what love is," where the father might be referring to a beneficial aspect or to some concern there will be lack of (significant) mutual satisfactions as they grow older but where the girl might then easily take him to be simply questioning her feelings for the boy, or the boy's feelings for her. In which case, she would probably reply, "But we do love each other."

And thus most likely would the idle and unproductive disagreement end with anger and/or hurt feelings, and with each side believing they are right and the other blind and obstinate.

Key Takeaways

- Students should begin to see all relationships in terms of the three aspects discussed in this chapter.

Key Terms

- The ***emotional aspect*** of relationships refers to feelings involving the other person, particularly, but not only, feelings of attraction or aversion for another person and will be explained in greater detail in subsequent chapters.
- The ***satisfaction/dissatisfaction aspect*** refers to how enjoyable or dissatisfying given times or acts in the relationship are for either or both partners or how satisfying or dissatisfying the relationship is in general for either or both and will be explained in greater detail in subsequent chapters.
- ***Ethical aspect of relationships*** refers to how good or bad, and how right or wrong for one or both people any given act in a relationship is or how good or bad for either or both the relationship in general is. Chapters 25 and 26 give a detailed explanation

about ethics and ethical principles.

Chapter 3 Review Questions

- ***Question***: Every relationship has the potential to involve what three aspects?
- ***Question***: What are the three clearest, most useful, most helpful ways of speaking and thinking about relationships?

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Chapter 4 The Emotional Aspect— Feelings

Chapter 4 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Express, recognize, and describe their feelings.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to understand more about the science of love.

There are three things, easily overlooked, to keep in mind concerning one's feelings toward another: (1) there are different kinds of feelings, two broad categories I am particularly interested in being feelings of ***attraction*** and feelings of ***aversion***. (I will discuss ***indifference*** or not having feelings toward another person later). Within these categories there are such different kinds of attraction as intellectual attraction, physical attraction (which may mean finding a person's face and/or body attractive but not necessarily sexually stimulating), sexual attraction, emotional attraction, romantic attraction, attraction out of loneliness, attraction out of sympathy or empathy, parental attraction, brotherly attraction, and various unnamed attractions often referred to as simply chemistry or perhaps just referred to as love, loving feelings, or friendship. Likewise, there are feelings of aversion such as intellectual disdain, sexual repulsion, physical repulsion, aversion due to self-withdrawal, dislike of "chemistry" (often usually expressed something like "I don't know why I dislike the man, I hardly know anything about him; I simply don't like him."), and again, probably a

number of feelings simply catalogued under hate or having no name at all. These are only some examples of feelings; it is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

And feelings may be directed even more specifically than these—one may be attracted toward another's mental capacities in one area, such as business, but not in another, such as philosophy; attracted toward another's face but not their legs, or vice-versa. One may narrow the focus even further and be attracted to the way someone talks about educational philosophy but not to the way they talk about political philosophy.

There is no reason that one cannot have feelings of aversion and feelings of attraction toward the same person at the same time. For example, one might be sexually attracted toward another, but so intellectually repelled by them that the hope is the partner will keep quiet in bed, if indeed the conversation does not prevent them from getting there. This particular combination seems fairly common in fact. Or, of course, one might have a friend one is intellectually attracted to or fascinated by in some area(s) but in whom one has not the slightest sexual interest. This is, of course, true of friends of the same sex who have no homosexual interests, but it can also be true of any friends of the opposite sex who just simply are not sexually attracted to each other. [In this book, unless I state otherwise, or unless it is obviously not the case, what I say about relationships will fit any relationship, whether heterosexual or homosexual, professional or personal, romantic or familial, or whatever.]

(2) The second thing to keep in mind about feelings is that many, if not all, of the different kinds of feelings, occur in various degrees. There are various degrees of sexual attraction or aversion, intellectual attraction or aversion, etc. There are no names for these various degrees, usually, outside of such a continuum as I loathe him, I hate him, I dislike him a lot, I dislike him, I don't really care about him one way or the other, I like him, I like him a lot, I really like him, I love him, I am really crazy about him. Or, there are degree

statements such as "I'd go to the ends of the earth for you but would only stay there X long," where X represents some period of time commensurate with the strength of the feelings of attraction. There are various vulgar, erotic, or funny– depending on your mood or point of view–measurements of sexual attraction characterized by the degree of sexual arousal one evokes, as measured in some physical characteristic(s) of that arousal that can be observed or quantified. There is also, from time to time, the attempt to standardize a woman's attractiveness mathematically–the numbers 1-10 (or 11) since the movie "10", but prior to that, in terms of the number of milli-Helens. Since Helen of Troy had the beauty to launch a thousand ships, one milli-Helen is the beauty to launch one ship. (Some girls then might be a 348; others a 652, or 0.5, etc.) But for the most part, the strength of one's feelings of attraction or aversion toward another, though often known inwardly obvious or easily discerned by others, has no standardized conventional verbal description. "How much do I love you" is a very meaningful question (if the aspect at issue here is a feeling or attraction), even if a verbal answer, particularly one specifying some sort of meaningful measurement, is difficult to state.

(3) It must also be kept in mind, something that seems easily forgotten, that no particular feeling often lasts for a very long time, the amount of time being dependent, at least in part, upon the immediate circumstances of the person with the feeling. For example, the way a woman feels toward her husband after making love with him is quite likely different from the way she feels toward him when she is playing golf, doing dishes, writing or reading a book, or worrying about getting to an appointment on time. If she is an attorney, she may have no feelings whatsoever about her husband while she is digging precedents out of a law library or cross-examining a witness. In short, other things often occupy our minds and/or influence our feelings toward other people; and quite often we don't even have feelings toward either loved ones or adversaries when our minds are on other things. Certainly the lady

lawyer might have feelings of some sort were she to be thinking about her husband, but insofar as she is not, she does not.

Scenario I

Imagine you are looking for a lifelong mate. What attributes, qualities, or other elements are you seeking in a mate – particularly a lifelong mate? Why are those particular qualities important to you? Do you think any of them are important in general or to everyone for a relationship being a good and lasting one? Do you look for or accept other attributes or elements for friendships or for going out with someone? If so, is that not in some way lowering your expectations or wasting time in the search for a mate, or is it okay to ('using actor Paul Newman's phrase') settle for hamburger, even short term, instead of seeking steak. (The context in which he used the phrase was in reference to never even being interested in cheating on his wife, Joanne Woodward, "because why go out for hamburger when you have steak at home?" But I am asking why even be interested in hamburger for a date if you are looking for a mate with higher qualities or value).

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Attraction in General

In light of the transitory nature of specific feelings or "episodes" of feeling, it is not the case, and it should not be expected to be the case, that for a person to have an attraction or aversion (in general) toward someone means they *always* are actually experiencing the feeling of that, or any, attraction or aversion for them. Neither, I think, does it mean that they would have that or some feeling were they to think of that person. One might only be distracted from an important task if they were to start thinking loving thoughts about a loved one, and thus, out of conscientiousness, seek to keep such feelings and thoughts out of the way. Or a person who is extremely tired or under stress might not be able to think lovingly about his loved one, even if he wanted to. Further, one might be temporarily angry with or disappointed by a loved one, and that feeling might outweigh any "general" feelings of love he has.

Sometimes, people seem to get feelings of attraction at the strangest times, for seemingly no reason, toward their loved ones, and often not to get them under what would seem to be the most conducive conditions. Attraction might arise in a bomb shelter and may not appear in the most seemingly romantic of restaurants.

Some people become very sexually aroused just by being in a hotel with a loved one; others find that environment too artificial, contrived, or institutional to get very sexually excited. Further, conditions that may stimulate feelings of attraction for one person toward another, may not stimulate that person's attraction toward a different person, even if that person is equally loved. (Say, a widow who remarries may find two different (kinds of) environments romantic with her different husbands.) Hence, I think it doubtful then that we could mean by two person's being attracted (in general) to each other that they experience feelings of attraction for each other under certain conditions.

It would be better, though not totally accurate, to mean by "A is attracted (in general) to B" that A often has particular feelings of attraction toward B and/or that A often has them under some or many of the kinds of conditions that are normal (in that culture) for people who often have particular feelings of attraction toward others.

Unfortunately, even this characterization, because it involves some sense of normalcy of having feelings, does not allow for the wide variety of individual differences involving feelings that people have. While one person may feel terribly romantic at one time at a candlelight dinner with wine and soft music, another person (or the same person at another time) may feel the situation so contrived or so demanding of romantic feelings that he can have none. Some people may feel terribly loving at the resolution of an argument with a loved one, while others may not feel so loving, but would rather seek time to heal from the wounds earlier inflicted or from one's own shameful behavior in the argument. One person may feel very close to another after a particular shared experience (say, seeing a certain poignant movie) while the other may feel the need to withdraw and contemplate the experience in quiet isolation. There are those who after intercourse feel especially affectionate and want to cuddle more and perhaps talk, while there are those who at that time would rather turn over and go to sleep.

How often then, or when, should people have specific feelings of

attraction for each other in order to be correctly said to be attracted to each other (in general)? Aside from the impossibility of it being all the time, it would seem that it needs simply to be at least as much as is reasonable to expect, allowing for the emotional constitution of each and the circumstances they are in. Some people simply feel affectionate, or have feelings of attraction, more often or more easily than others. And at any given time or period in life, any given person may find himself or herself in circumstances more or less conducive to his or her having romantic feelings. Hence, to say that A is attracted to B (in general) (as opposed to feeling attracted at just some particular moment), should mean something like "A often has particular feelings of attraction toward B under conditions that are normal (in that culture) for people who have such feelings toward others—with some consideration to be allowed for A's responses in general to such conditions." So that if, say candlelight is not generally conducive to a romantic feeling for A, it should not be a sign of his not feeling attracted in general to his companion just because he does not feel attracted toward her in some particular candlelit setting where all other couples' feelings are waxing romantic. One should not have to feel attractions or romantic feelings in settings that perhaps most others do. One may have his or her own kinds of settings or conditions under which attraction flourishes for someone, if it is ever to do so for them at all. I myself seem to become particularly attracted quite often when a woman displays wit, barbed and playful but not unkind humor, and intellectual insight or prowess; this can be more sexually or emotionally stimulating than any amount of candlelight and cuisine in a cozy restaurant. Other men are obviously often different from me.

However, I think there is some need to consider cultural norms in that it would seem odd if, say, a fellow only felt attracted (even if this is a frequent occurrence for him) when he saw his companion in a robe and curlers and not under any other normally conducive circumstances. Or if an exceedingly "cold" person were to feel some

spark toward another, which may be a milestone for him, but hardly a blip for someone else, would we say that either of these comparatively unusual fellows was in general attracted to the object of his affections? My definition does not give a clear answer to these kinds of cases, but then neither does ordinary language or our ordinary notions about attraction or love. But at least with my analysis, we can verbally describe the relationship to others without having to state, one way or the other, whether A is attracted in general, or loves, his companion or not. Instead we can say it is not so simple as that; that A is attracted to B whenever, but only whenever B is in curlers. Or that A has more and stronger feelings of attraction for B than he ever had for anyone else, but that it is not very often nor very strong compared to most people. That describes all there is to describe; there is no need to try to add then whether A could be accurately said to be attracted in general to B (or in love with B) or not. That addition under the circumstances would be so vague as to convey no message accurately. I think my characterization of general attraction is not particularly more nebulous than the notion itself, and my explanation of that characterization certainly brings to light the kinds of things one can say in order to be more specific when it is important to be specific.

Understanding Specific Feelings

I think it is true that unless one has felt a particular kind of feeling, or something very similar, one cannot know exactly what that feeling is like. This is so even if you can accurately identify someone's having a feeling from their external behavior without having experienced that feeling yourself. You can identify it because someone before named such behavior as typifying that kind of feeling. So that a little child might be able to identify an older sibling's being in puppy love because he then "acts goofy" whereas otherwise he does not. But that is not to know firsthand what the feeling feels like. This is true even of some particular pain someone else might have, though you may have experienced pain of a different sort yourself. Therefore, if a young person, has not

experienced romantic feelings toward another person, it may be difficult to explain or describe (the feeling of) love to him or her. Poetry or movies may be of some help here to possibly induce the feeling and show what it is like; but more likely they will only help illuminate the feeling for someone who has already actually experienced it. Hence this discussion will be of little value to one who has never experienced feelings of attraction, or the kinds of feelings I will be talking about. It is only after such experiences (or at least something sufficiently close to them) that such a discussion can help sort out whatever puzzling problems there might be about them.

This is not to say one has to have had all these kinds of feelings to appreciate most of what is said here. I myself, for example, am not sure I have had the kind of feelings I name here as physical (apart from sexual) attraction in the way some of my (female) students indicate they have. They were the ones who wanted to make this distinction and who have felt it and therefore understand it. They talk about it in terms of wanting to watch the other person and admire his beauty without it being sexual in any way; yet it is somehow attracting. I am not sure that I have felt that way toward a person, though sometimes I meet people I wish to photograph because of their beauty and because I think I can get a beautiful photograph that captures and reflects it. I may even stare at them sometimes, but I couldn't say I was attracted to them. In fact, I know I have taken what I thought were exquisite portraits of extremely beautiful women for whom I did not feel the slightest attraction. In that case, it was not unlike taking pictures of beautiful sunsets, landscapes or still-lifes. I found them fascinating to look at for a time, and fascinating to have as a subject, seeking the best angles and light direction, etc., in order to create a good picture, but was not in any way drawn toward them in what I would consider to be a feeling of attraction. As Cervantes wrote in Don Quixote: "All kinds of beauty do not inspire love; there is a kind which only pleases the sight, but does not captivate the affections" (Roberts,

1940, p. 58). But, as I said, many of my female students have said they can discern a feeling of physical attraction that is not related to romantic, sexual, or emotional attraction, but is a kind of attraction just to the way a man looks.

And I make a distinction also between emotional attraction and romantic attraction that many men seem not to understand. One type I often have experienced is what I call my Tuesday Weld complex–the tender, protective, emotional attraction I get for almost any girl or woman who has that vulnerable, fragile, almost-but-not-quite pouting look on her face reminiscent to me of the Tuesday Weld look from her early movies and photographs. It involves a feeling to comfort her in my arms, and make everything all right. And though there is sometimes a slight sexual feeling also involved, it is not at all primary.

One can understand the distinction of sexual attraction that is not romantic or even emotional, in terms of, say, a fantasy about someone that one might find very sexually arousing but who one knows one would not really want to have much to do with, sexually or otherwise, in real life or under any normal circumstances. It is the kind of fantasy where one knows he or she enjoys thinking about having sex with the person more than he or she would enjoy actually having sex with the person. In fact, the latter joy might be known most likely not to occur even if the opportunity did; hence the fantasy is simply enjoyed as a fantasy, and is not sought to be turned into a reality.

And one can separate romantic feelings, or loving feelings, from sexual attraction in other ways too. For example, if one has a feeling of tenderness for or of wanting to be around or to caress another even after all sexual desires have been fulfilled (say, just after a very satisfying sexual time together), then this seems different from such feelings that involve just wanting to have sex with someone whom you have no feeling for afterward and whom you cannot wait to leave, even if this also involves wanting to hold and caress them **before** sex with them.

Intellectual attraction is fairly easy to separate from other sorts of attractions like sexual or physical attractions in that it can usually be fulfilled by letters or telephone or other sorts of communications where each person's intellect or thoughts can be stimulated by the other without their being together physically. And one can be intellectually stimulated by a roommate, parent or sibling without thereby having homosexual or incestuous tendencies. Intellectual attraction is more for another person's ideas or mind than toward their body or physical presence. One of the stranger cases of this for me was when I came across Jane Austen's novels at the age of 37, devoured all of them in quick succession because of her warmth, wit, charm, perceptiveness, and style of expression and then found myself for the longest time thinking about the lady herself, missing her, and deeply lamenting her death (though she was much more than 150 years my senior), and disappointed she had no opportunity to write me more of her thoughts.

Of course, one may be attracted to another person in more than one way, and sometimes one sort of attraction, such as intellectual, may lead to another, say sexual, though, as in the above example of roommates and relatives, that is not necessary. In fact, quite a lot of attractions may lead to sexual attraction. But it also works the other way around as well; initial sexual attraction may lead to, or be accompanied by, emotional or intellectual attraction. All kinds of attractions may accompany one another or induce one another; but they need not. Since they can occur independently, I think they can be considered to be independent. And certainly they may be thought about as separate entities for purposes of analyzing them in order to understand one's relationships and one's self better. It is important to be able to distinguish one's feelings so that one might act appropriately in regard to them. This is harder for young, or otherwise inexperienced, people since they have not always had a great number of kinds of feelings of attraction for other people, and so may not realize the variety of attractions they might be able to have. It is easy for them perhaps to mistake, say, their own gratitude

toward another for love, or to mistake the actions of another as those expressing desire instead of simply the kindness intended.

It is also difficult, and often disastrous, for people who think there is only one kind of attraction and so who get unnecessarily perplexed when they have, for someone other than the only person they feel they should truly love, what are "only" feelings of intellectual attraction but which they think must be some kind of attraction of a more intimate sort. Likewise for people who may get jealous when their spouse becomes intellectually stimulated by another for the same reason. Likewise with perhaps other sorts of feelings of attraction. One might find oneself with natural emotional feelings about more than one person at the same time and then feel not as monogamous as one thinks one should. Yet those feelings may not be romantic

ones, but simply feelings of close friendship about which no one should feel ashamed. This is not to consider here (but to save for later) questions concerning actual romantic feelings toward more than one person (at the same time). I think many college students mistake intellectual attraction for a teacher – finding the teacher intellectually stimulating or finding his/her classroom personality and style fascinating and impressive – as romantic attraction. And it is important to be able to understand one's feelings and emotions in order to understand what behavior they might warrant. It is also important to understand other people's feelings. It would hardly be right, say, to take sexual advantage of another's feelings of gratitude or a student's intellectual attraction just because the other person or student confused those feelings with romantic or sexual attraction or with feelings of love. And this is not even to talk of understanding one's emotions simply for the personal sake of self-knowledge apart from any actions they may involve or engender. I myself think such self-knowledge is important and interesting.

And I do not see how Rollo May's four categories help much. Considering just feelings alone, how do the distinctions among *eros*, *agape*, *philia*, and/or lust fit into the situation of wanting to play

tennis with someone but not to go to a movie with them, or of wanting to go to bed with someone, but not while you are in the middle of an exciting tv show or book. Is it agape or philia if you stop to change a stranger's flat tire when you have time, but neither when you don't because you are late to an important appointment. What about temporary anger or disappointment when a loved one displeases you or does something wrong? What about when you are engrossed in work or play to the extent you are not even thinking about another person? Couldn't you still be one who loves them? I think there are too many kinds of feelings and situations and too many combinations of feelings of attraction and aversion to try to combine them meaningfully in just a few simple categories.

Feelings Concerning Others, Other Than Attraction and Aversion

For my purposes, feelings of attraction and aversion will play an important part in this book, but it is important to recognize that we can have, and often do have, other sorts of feelings concerning ourselves and other people. Some of these feelings I put into five broad categories: feelings toward your own actions; feelings toward the actions of others; feelings toward others; feelings toward yourself; and feelings arising out of others' circumstances and feelings.

For example, you might feel guilty or ashamed about something you have done to cause a friend a problem (or glee at causing an enemy a problem)–feelings toward your own actions. You might feel angry or embarrassed at something a friend or enemy has done–feelings toward another's actions. This is different, I think, from being, say angry with the person; for example, someone you might love and respect might do exactly the same thing as someone you regard less highly, and though you might deplore or be angered by the actions of both, your feelings toward your friend may be only one of disappointment, while you might be very angry with the other person. Or you may be angry with your friend but may not be with the other person whose actions in this case you might only dismiss as another typical example of his impossible behavior.

More clear-cut feelings toward other people, as opposed to their actions, are feelings of comfortableness or discomfort in their presence, feelings of respect, awe, or admiration, feelings of kindness, gentleness, or protectiveness toward them, though maybe not for any particular thing(s) they have done, and maybe even in spite of things they have done. This may be because of the way they look, or it may just be a matter of your combined "chemistries" or some long- forgotten experience of which they trigger stirrings.

Feelings toward yourself are those such as self-doubt, self-respect, self-hate or self like (in spite, or because, of what you do). They may be inspired by comparisons of yourself with others or by what others have said to you or about you, and to that extent have a relational aspect; or you may have feelings of pride, fear, doubt, or joy concerning whether a loved one loves you or not; or feelings of regret that someone does like you and you cannot reciprocate.

Other sorts of feelings are simply the joy you might take in—the joys of loved ones or the problems of those you intensely dislike. Or the sorrow you feel for the grief and suffering of loved ones, and jealousy, disdain, or resentment in the joys of adversaries. And, as philosopher Thomas Nagel has pointed out, feelings can build upon themselves or other feelings too. The excitement you feel in being stimulated by another person in some way, and by stimulating them, is often made further pleasurable and exciting by the knowledge you do excite them and they do enjoy exciting you and being excited by you, etc.,etc., in a kind of rising spiral.

Other Feelings

Finally, there are feelings one can have that have little or nothing to do with relationships: feelings of apathy, energy, tiredness, listlessness, boredom, withdrawal or wanting to be alone, nausea, sickness of one sort or another, feelings of coming unglued or falling apart, feelings of pulling yourself back together again, and many more.

More than one feeling may be experienced at a time; for example, pride in another's accomplishments and at the same time fear that

you will not be able to measure up to his or her new "worth." Or, for example, remorse and guilt over an action of your own, and yet simultaneous anger and disappointment that your friends do not sympathize with or understand your feelings and behavior, or that they do not see your mistake as an aberration rather than as the result of a flawed character trait.

Various feelings may also accompany feelings of attraction and aversion. Easily seen together are anger toward a person one does not like in the first place anyway. But one can also be angry with a loved one and, in some rare moments, find oneself feeling both angry and loving toward that person simultaneously. It is especially important, as will be discussed later with regard to commitment in a love relationship, that one should be able to distinguish one's own, and others', feelings and be able to understand that they can often be experienced simultaneously or in quick succession of each other. One does not want to mistake, say, anger (which can be temporary and directed at something quite specific) for some more permanent kind of loss of feeling of attraction or concern for the other, and then behave or react in a compounding or devastating, inappropriate manner.

Some kinds of feelings may be difficult to distinguish. One of my students said he used to steal empty soft drink bottles and return them to stores for deposit refunds. He "stole" them out of trash cans. He said he used to feel guilty about doing it even though he felt it was not really wrong to do it. I suspect what he really felt was not guilt (which I think first requires a belief of wrong-doing), but fear that he would get caught and punished. Sometimes, such fear feels very much like feelings of guilt. And it is often hard to distinguish between them because sometimes you have to wait until you are secure from discovery to see whether you still have the feeling—if you do, it was probably a feeling of guilt, since you are still guilty, though safe; if you do not, then it was probably fear of discovery.

Feelings play such a great part in relationships and in life that it is important to be able to analyze and understand them so that you and your loved ones can strive to eliminate the avoidable, harmful,

and unpleasant ones, and so that you can respond appropriately and beneficially to your own feelings and those of others. Being able to understand and analyze your own feelings can also be a pleasurable end in itself, as well as being useful in promoting better feelings.

Describing Feelings

In order for you to be better able to get along with others concerning the areas of feelings, it is often important for you to be able to communicate your feelings to them and to be able to appreciate the descriptions of their feelings, sometimes having to elicit those descriptions from them. Since, as mentioned earlier, few feelings have names that express adequately their description and intensity, often one must use indirect means to explain or understand them.

There are a number of ways to do this. Some feelings, such as anger, easily lend themselves to expression in the form of fist pounding, lamp throwing, yelling, etc. Unfortunately, although that might show you are angry, it does not always show whom you are angry with (it might even be yourself, though you appear to be taking it out on someone else) or what you are angry about, and, moreover, it can easily tend to lead to (further) hostility, rather than understanding on the part of the one facing your wrath. It is usually better (from a relationship point of view– assuming you are dealing with someone who cares how you feel about this matter and who would like to set it right, even if they were the offending party to begin with) if you can gently verbally explain to another how angry you are and what the cause is. (If you are dealing with someone extremely obtuse or extremely uncaring, then this may all be a futile gesture and, in order to get redress, you might have to end up pounding your fist and slamming doors or whatever to show that you really are displeased, and just how much.) This can be done often in the same way that other feelings can be explained, first by giving the closest descriptive name, if there is one, that you can (e.g., anger or disappointment) and then narrowing it down even further to show the specific feeling and its intensity in any

of the following ways. (These ways would also be useful to begin with, if what you feel does not have a name that you know.) (1) In the case of something like anger, instead of throwing something, you might simply say you are so angry you feel you could pick up the desk and throw it out the window. In other words, instead of doing some extreme action that might be characteristic of how you feel, you could simply describe the action you feel like doing. (2) If the other person has been in this state of mind before, you might remind them of the time and circumstances and their feelings. (3) You can describe the circumstances, as you saw them, that led you to your feelings, perhaps thereby leading your listener to nearly the same state of mind, or leading him to see what yours might be. (4) You could perhaps cite literary passages or scenes from movies or television that captured or express similar feelings. (5) You could act out the feelings– for example, you could throw something you know will not break in a direction you know will not do any damage or harm, pretending to be in a rage, and then immediately, in a calm, rational voice, say, "And that is about how I feel about this," showing that you were not really in a rage but just pretending to be.

With any or all of these efforts, the other person might still not understand how you feel, and you may have to try to think up whatever method you can as time goes by, to get your point across if it is a matter that is important to pursue. Someday, you may be together watching a movie with a scene portraying your past indescribable mood, and you will then have the means to describe it. "Remember when I ...; well that's it, that's it!!!"

Trying to describe and communicate one's feelings can be very difficult and exasperating; but it can be extremely rewarding, particularly when success is hard won. The better you can discuss and describe your feelings, the better you will be able to understand them and their origins or causes, and the better you will be able to help someone else describe theirs to you and deal with them. Feelings are not always as straightforward as they seem to be. I will discuss jealousy and also the pleasure of physical contact later in this book to give some examples of this. At this point, however, I

would like to try to give a description, not an analysis of its causes, but simply a description of one important kind of feeling of attraction– romantic attraction.

Romantic Attraction

There are two meanings to the terms romance, romantic attraction, romantic feelings, romantic love. One is the general sense used in order merely to distinguish the kind of love or feelings between, say, married or engaged couples on the one hand from familial love, brotherly love, friendship, etc. The second sense, and the one which I wish to try to describe here, is the more specific reference to a kind of excitement and/or passion or passionate attraction. It is this sense of the word, not the first, that is meant in a sentence such as "although we still love each other, even more than when we first married, there is not the kind of romance in our relationship that there used to be." Sometimes when people distinguish between loving and being "in love" they mean by being "in love" this second – more passionate, magical, exciting, and gripping – kind of state.

Romantic love, in this specific sense of exciting, magical, passionate, or breathtaking kind of feeling of attraction or love, is not the only kind of feeling of attraction or feeling of love, even for someone you might strongly want to marry, but it is a typical, often sought, kind of feeling about which there is at least one important misconception, and on which there is, in western society, perhaps too much of a wrong kind of emphasis in its relation to marriage.

Although very young children may not be able to experience and understand romantic feelings, I do not think one has to be very old to have some experience with them, with the kind of feelings that love or infatuation involve. I can remember having romantic feelings toward a girl in my second grade class. I couldn't wait to be around her. We walked places together, talked together, played checkers together. I enjoyed all of that, and I would think about it and her again at night when I was alone in my room. It was difficult to get her out of my mind, and I didn't particularly want her out of my

mind anyway. Of course, then, for a second grader, it was not very masculine or popular to like girls, so I never shared my thoughts and feelings and even some of my dreams about her with anyone, not even her. And, of course, I did not recognize these feelings as romantic ones or think about them in those terms, but I could look back on them later as not being very unlike the kinds of feelings toward girls and women that I did recognize as romantic.

This kind of case is also one example of why I believe that romantic feelings do not have to involve any sorts of sexual feelings, though often (but not always) at later ages the two do occur together. I didn't have any sorts of sexual feelings or even desires to hold her in my arms or to cuddle with her—or anyone, at that age. Sexual feelings, when they did arise, even at that age, and a bit later, were not associated with anyone in particular, and not for a long while with the girls I felt romantic about and tended to put on a pristine pedestal. When I was 10 or eleven years old, I found that nude or nearly nude pictures of women in Playboy, Life magazine, *National Geographic*, or Rubens' paintings could arouse certain sexual feelings; but that had nothing to do with love or romance; and the way I felt about any real girl in a pretty cotton dress with a pony tail or pageboy hair style had nothing to do with those sorts of (sexual) feelings. And even today, it is fairly easy to distinguish romantic and emotional feelings from feelings of sexual attraction. And although both sorts of feelings may have the same object at the same time, they don't always.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, there seems to me to be a feeling of romance and even of the desire for physical contact and tenderness of touch by Romeo for Juliet which is yet devoid of sexual desire or longings. It is expressed by him when he sees her from a distance he cannot then shorten, and feels:

"See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand! O, that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek." (Rom. 2.2.23-25)

When Juliet awaits Romeo for their wedding night, her feelings

of sexual or physical attraction are made apparent in part of her soliloquy, but that is hardly the main element of their love for each other. And even in that soliloquy, there is no sexuality, but only enchanted affection, implied in lines like:

"Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die, Take him, and cut him out in little stars,

And he will make the face of heaven so fine, That all the world will be in love with night,

And pay no worship to the garish sun." (3.2.21-25)

I think particularly in young love, and particularly in many natural cases where young people cannot imagine sex to be anything but disgusting (which is the way many people feel about it when they first hear about it..."gads, why would anybody want to do that?!"), sexual attraction simply is not an element, or is hardly the most important element, in the kinds of feelings that do occur. This is also true at times in the relationships of people who are not children. Not all walks in the park together on a rainy day lead to the bedroom or even the desire for that. Nor may affectionate admiration for someone's professional, athletic, moral, or intellectual ability spark sexual arousal. People incapable of (further) sex are still capable of affection and tenderness; and particularly after quite satisfying sex, one might feel both the most loving tenderness toward one's partner and no desire at all for (further) sex. I will say more about this later.

And just as romantic feelings of attraction may accompany (but do not require) sexual feelings of attraction toward the same person, so may such romantic feelings also either accompany or fail to accompany (for there is no necessary relationship here either) other feelings of attraction – intellectual (being drawn toward someone's intellect or toward someone because of their intellect), artistic or creative (being drawn toward someone's artistic sensitivity or ideas or drawn to the person because of his or her artistic traits), "fatherly" or protective, or whatever. Romantic feelings are different from these though they may occur at the same time with all or any of them, or with other feelings.

At any rate, though in some cases sexual attraction may be a part of love or may accompany romantic attraction, it is not, even then, necessarily its sole or its most important component. Other aspects are things like simply feeling great about the world and other people. As the song goes, sometimes "Everybody loves a lover. I'm a lover; everybody loves me; and I love everybody, since I fell in love with you." Or as John Byrom wrote: in A *Pastoral:*

"When things were as fine as could possibly be, I thought 'twas the spring; but alas it was she." (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 466)

Many movies show people jumping or running about or dancing cheerfully, often while exuberantly shouting. There is often the feeling of simply finding one's thoughts turned frequently and happily toward the loved one; often wanting to be near the loved one, or at least in contact with their thoughts through phone or letter, or in contact with their image as in dreams, for without such dreams, even sleep can seem an impediment to being together. Again, Juliet, when time has come for Romeo either to leave or to be caught by her family:

"'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone And yet no further than a wanton's bird; Who lets it hop a little from her hand,

Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves, And with a silk thread plucks it back again, So loving-jealous of his liberty." (2.2.177-182)

The opposite of all this, of course, is bottomless woe and/or anger at the obstacles when love is frustrated or when desirous of return is unreturned, or when lovers yearning to be together are kept apart. (Love is not always desired to be returned, or even known; in some cases, loving secretly from afar can be a very, very sweet feeling.)

"He who falls in love meets a worse fate than he who leaps from a rock."—Plautus (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 476).

"Could I love less, I would be happier now."—Phillip James Bailey (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 464).

"Love is a thing full of anxious fears."—Ovid (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 475).

"By heaven, I do love: and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy" (Shakespeare, *Love Labour's Lost*, 4. 3. 13-15).

"I loved you and my love had no return,/ and therefore my true love has been my death."–Tennyson, *Lancelot and Elaine* (cited in Roberts 1940, p. 482).

"She never told her love, But let her concealment, like a worm i' the bud, feed on her damask cheek; she pin'd in thought, And with a green and yellow melancholy. She sat like patience on a monument, Smiling at grief" (Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 2. 4. 114-118).

And, of course, the death of a loved one causes the deepest of sorrows and is one of the greatest losses. Lovers being kept apart is one of the oldest, saddest, most powerful, and most recurrent themes in literature and film.

For the insecure there is often a feeling of being unworthy of having a loved one, simultaneous with the wondrous feeling that life now, because of finding a loved one, has the greatest value. Hawthorne: "What a sweet reverence is that when a young man deems his mistress a little more than mortal and almost chides himself for longing to bring her close to his heart." (*The Marble Faun*, cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 469)

People in romantic love often tend to grin a lot when in their beloved's company. Among shy persons, sometimes embarrassment is common. A statement true often enough to be an interesting insight is to be found in Jean De La Bruyere's *Le Caracteres*: "The beginning and end of love are marked by embarrassment when the two find themselves alone"(cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 471).

People in romantic love often (but not always) want to give things to their beloved; they often like to buy or make presents, or write things (love letters, poetry, books, music) for their beloved. They often like to do things for their beloved. Often they find pleasure in making their beloved happy. Often they find sorrow in not being able to do these things.

I will show later that it is difficult or impossible to see exactly what it is that inspires us to such feelings or desires for another,

what exactly it is that incites such passions, such actions, such thoughts, such pleasures in success and such sorrow in failure. Certainly we feel no electricity when we touch or think about someone we do not care for in this way. Nor even do we vicariously feel such enchantment when we see others feel this way about someone we dislike or find repugnant. But one thing is certain—when one is smitten by romantic love, when one falls in romantic love, that magic, that aura, that enchantment, passion, excitement, anticipation (and sometimes devastating disappointment and frustration), that warm glow of joy, cannot be doubted. And though it may never be clear *what* it is that makes us feel this way, there will be no doubt *who* it is that makes us feel this way.

Key Takeaways

- Identify that there are many different kinds of feelings involved in relationships and being able to differentiate them, even on the basis of subtle differences and distinctions.

Key Terms

- ***Attraction*** involves wanting to be in contact with another person in some manner or other to some degree, whether in proximity or in communication with them.

- ***Aversion*** involves to some degree not wanting to be in contact with another person.
- ***Indifference*** involves not caring whether one is around the other person or not, in any particular form or, for any particular purpose.

Chapter 4 Review Questions

- ***Question***: What things, easily overlooked, should be kept in mind concerning one's feelings toward another?
- ***Question***: What settings or conditions may cause attraction to flourish?
- ***Question***: How do you explain the phenomenon that although some people after a divorce or breakup of a longtime marriage or relationship marry or get into a relationship with someone similar to their first mate, while many people seek and marry someone totally different? Do you think that if your first marriage or long term full relationship ended, you would seek someone very similar or someone very different?
- ***Question***: If it is a person's qualities or attributes that make you attracted to them romantically, how is that a representation of their personality?

Chapter 5 The Satisfaction Aspect

Chapter 5 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain how satisfactions can be in different degrees and can arise from satisfaction of three different kinds of wants, those of: 1) felt desires or expectations, 2) half-expectations or half-desires, and 3) totally unexpected pleasures. Discuss the similarities that can arise from lack of fulfillment of the first two (above) and from totally unexpected disappointment or displeasure.
- Argue that meeting common interests is not necessarily the same thing as having mutual satisfactions.

Watch this video or scan the QR code to see learn more about healthy relationships.

Simply being attracted to someone, even in cases where there are no outside impediments thwarting your being together, does not insure that they and their actions will bring you any happiness or satisfaction. In fact, in far too many cases quite the opposite is the result. One of the hardest kinds of relationships to end or endure is that which hangs on because the two people have some sort of attraction for each other even though whenever they are together, one or both make the other thoroughly miserable.

Equally but opposite, finding someone unattractive does not necessarily dispose you to find all their actions unpleasant, disappointing, or dissatisfying. You may, for example, enjoy playing tennis with someone you have no feelings for one way or the other, or even with someone you do not like. (In fact, when you play well against someone you dislike, win, and have to work very hard to do so because they are a good player, it might be a rather exhilarating experience.)

I wish to call the aspect of a relationship in which you find the other person's behavior on the one hand agreeable, fun, pleasant, satisfying, heart-warming, engaging, heavenly, ecstatic, etc., or, on the other hand, unpleasant, disagreeable, irritating, offensive,

nauseating, heartbreaking, tormenting, etc., the satisfaction-dissatisfaction aspect, or for short, the satisfaction aspect.

In a sense, this is really a number of aspects which often, but not always, coincide. It is a number of aspects because we can have satisfactions and/or dissatisfactions in different areas and because our satisfactions and dissatisfactions, being feelings, can often both occur without their being any overriding feeling of either satisfaction or of dissatisfaction; that is, neither feeling takes precedence. For example, in the over- simple case of the person who finds his or her partner sexually gratifying but intellectually stultifying, or vice versa, an evening may be spent alternating between the sublime and the intolerable, without any sort of average able to be felt, calculated, or, for any meaningfully informative purpose, given. There may be nothing one can say in terms of one point on one satisfaction-dissatisfaction scale about the entire evening, but only point out that during the evening there were times with much satisfaction (of certain sorts), other times with much dissatisfaction (of certain sorts), and still other times with some of each (of whatever sorts).

Sometimes, of course, we feel that we can put an entire period of time on one point on one scale, simply because we actually feel that the annoyances were totally overridden by the pleasantries (or vice versa) and that on the whole the occasion was quite satisfactory. Or we can demarcate such a point on one scale because the time in question was either wholly pleasant or wholly unpleasant. It is important to remember though that this is not always the case – that sometimes our feelings are mixed, and there is no point, and often no sense, in trying to "average" them on one point of one satisfaction-dissatisfaction scale.

Now there may be times and areas when one is neither particularly satisfied nor dissatisfied. If it is general or overall, one might call this a state of the blahs. I do not call it that, however, because I consider a state of lethargy, bored inactivity, doldrums, or the blahs as being distinctly dissatisfying. But whatever it might be called then, if there is (are) such a middle state(s), I would put it

(them) on the "center" of any satisfaction- dissatisfaction scale that runs from one end of most intense dissatisfaction to the other end of most intense satisfaction, centered between weakest satisfaction and weakest dissatisfaction. What matters is to be able to recognize the condition and to be able to discuss it in application to relationships if it should occur. It is not important that we discuss relationships in the fewest number of terms, distinctions, or depictions, but it is important that we make distinctions which are accurate and which reflect the significant things we want and need to consider in relationships.

Similarly, with regard to feelings, it is not important how exactly we may want to describe the case where we have no particular feelings about someone in terms of *the attraction-aversion scale(s)*; whether it is in between attraction and aversion or at one end of either side, or to consider such indifference as something altogether different. I myself tend to think of attractions and aversions as being able to be depicted on one, or a number, of continuous scales, from intense repugnance or aversion (in general, or in one or more specific areas – physical, sexual, intellectual, artistic, etc.) to intense attraction (in general, or in one or more areas), with "having no feelings", or feeling indifferent, about someone, lying "in the middle" between the mildest attraction and the mildest aversion. But the point is simply to be able to recognize such a state of having no attraction or aversion to someone should it occur and to be able to think about it's significance, if any, for your relationship with that person.

When I said at the beginning of chapter 3 that all relationships have the potential to involve emotional, satisfaction-dissatisfaction, and ethical aspects, I was including cases where those emotions, satisfactions, and benefits (or dissatisfactions or harms) were zero or non-existent. The *categories* apply to every relationship, whatever the contents, or the lack of contents, of those categories. It can be just as important to know there are no feelings, no benefits, or no joys in (areas of) a relationship (and no harms or

dissatisfactions) as to know there are and to know what they are (and in what areas).

With most people whom we know over a period of time, we come to have a good idea of which kinds of activities we enjoy with them and which we do not. Cards or golf with Jones might be enjoyable, but he is not the person with whom to discuss serious personal problems or anxieties. Sally may be good company when you feel lighthearted and want to kid around or just have some small talk for a few hours without having to be serious; she may not be the person with whom you want to play chess or discuss serious matters about work. Mary may be a great chess opponent for you and may enjoy the same kind of movies you do, but she may not be very good company at a basketball game or fashion show. Martin may be someone you want to build your house or repair your car, but not to have over for a dinner party. We generally do not set out to pigeonhole our friends and acquaintances but we do often find out that we don't enjoy doing the same things with all of them. Sometimes, as with regard to sports and games, they may simply not be close enough to your level of (in)competence to enjoy playing with them, unless you are in the mood for giving or taking lessons rather than simply playing.

Likewise with regard to specialized areas of interest such as your field of work or one of your hobbies. Sometimes people's personalities or general abilities tend to cause you to avoid or include whole kinds of areas with them. A know-it-all, argumentative type is generally not much fun to talk politics, religion, social criticism, etc. with even though participating in sports with him or her might be quite enjoyable, as long as the sport does not allow much time for lectures. Some people are not very introspective, so introspective persons might tend to avoid areas of discourse with them they would love to discuss with someone sensitive to such matters. Devout liberals and devout conservatives may have difficulty discussing certain matters without getting one another upset, and yet still be the best of friends. In fact, sometimes it is because they are otherwise the best of friends that they find it

so unnerving that the other person is so ignorant, stubborn, blind, unreasonable, and insensitive about such matters.

And though whether one is attracted to the other person or not sometimes influences what one likes to do with them, generally it does not. Kissing, making love, etc. for most people most of the time in our culture often depend in part for their satisfaction on one's being at least somewhat attracted to the other person. But one can enjoy doing many things with people one is not attracted to. One certainly can enjoy talking or playing tennis with a relative without having incestuous motives; or with a person of the same sex, without thereby being homosexual.

One can enjoy the company of one's friends without having any particular attractions or feelings other than feelings of friendship and enjoyable companionship with them. One might even sometimes enjoy an activity with, or the company of, strangers one has no particular attractions for. One may prefer, in fact, to discuss certain problems with a stranger rather than a friend, or may prefer to play tennis, when in a very aggressive mood, with someone he does not much like at all.

And on the opposite side, having strong feelings of attraction for someone does not in any way assure that you will enjoy doing some particular activity with them. Having a strong sexual or physical attraction for someone else certainly does not insure they will be able to discuss in any interesting way, issues of interest to you nor be much fun at the tennis court, bowling alley, art museum or some particular movie. It may not even guaranty finding them enjoyable in bed. Even having strong emotional and physical attractions for each other does not guaranty that there will not be some activities that one would prefer doing with someone else, or alone. Many men who love their wives would just rather play golf with other men; and often their golfing wives equally prefer playing their golf with other women. I generally prefer to watch serious television productions alone rather than with most people I am very close to

because I find, if we watch together we often tend to interrupt each other's' reveries with comments at the wrong times.

There are people though who, it seems, are very happy doing about anything with someone they like just because they are with that person. They enjoy being at otherwise boring or deplorable movies, conventions, sports events, concerts, whatever, as long as they are spending time with a loved one or one for whom they have strong feelings of attachment.

From informal surveys I have taken on this matter, it appears most often to be single girls and young women who fall into this category, and whether their views will change as they get older, I do not know. But it remains that for such people, what they will most often find satisfying about activities they share in a relationship will have less to do with their abilities or interests in those activities, or with how well the activities go, than it will with the fact they are sharing them with the one for whom they have strong feelings of attraction. Hence, it will be important for them that their loved ones be able and willing to spend time with them, more time perhaps than most couples might tend to want to share just for the sake of being together, rather than doing something together that is interesting to both.

I am talking here about general tendencies, since most people find they want simply to be around a loved one at times even though they really have nothing they particularly want to say or to do. Most people will periodically enjoy sharing an activity with a loved one more for the sake of the sharing than of the activity. For example, a championship bowler who loves the competition of the sport might go bowling with a less competent friend or loved one just for the sake of their company, not even feeling compelled to give lessons, rather than for any exhilaration that might come from competition. And conversely, I would suspect that even the most companion-loving people find times that their partner's or opponent's ability, or their own (lack of) interest, in some activity is more important than whether they have strong feelings for them or not. There must be times, I would think, when they want to talk with someone

who understands something better than a loved one might, or want to go somewhere or do something with someone else whose interests and/or abilities might be closer to their own—at least in that particular area.

It is easy to see how dissatisfaction could easily creep in to a relationship between a "company lover" (who wants a loved one's companionship regardless of activity) and an "activity lover" (who wants a particular satisfying activity and the proper companion who makes it (even more) satisfying), particularly if they do not understand each other's' needs or desires, where the company lover is unable to satisfy the activity lover and the activity lover is unwilling to satisfy the company lover because of his or her own quest for a properly competent companion for the activity, though a less loving and less loved one.

THREE KINDS OF SATISFACTIONS (DISSATISFACTIONS)

There are, I think, three kinds of satisfactions or dissatisfactions. I will speak here only about satisfactions for the sake of brevity, but the situation is parallel with regard to dissatisfactions. The three kinds of satisfactions are:

(1) the satisfactions of conscious or (self-) known wants, hopes, or expectations,

(2) the satisfaction of what I will call half-wants, half- hopes, half-wishes, or half-expectations, and

(3) totally unexpected pleasures.

(1) Known Wants, Hopes, and Expectation

By conscious or known wants, hopes, or expectations I mean those we actually feel and of which we are aware. For example, one might have a craving for a specific kind of chocolate at some time and be very aware of it. A person might want something that catches his eye in a store window, might deliberately pass that store as often as possible to be sure the item is still there or to see whether the price has been marked down or not, and be saving every dollar he can to be able to someday purchase it. Ask him any time if there is anything he wants and immediately he will mention this item. One

can expect things too; for example, that their spouse might give them a particular gift of an object they have been lavishly giving hints about for their birthday or Christmas. Likewise we have such desires and expectations about behavior. One might be dying to meet someone with whom they can speak French, discuss their butterfly collection, go fishing, or someone who knows how to build stained glass or home television satellite receiving stations. Or one might expect certain people one has heard

or read about to behave in certain ways. I was terribly disappointed one time to attend a lecture by an author whose writings were witty, intellectual, charming, and extremely interesting. He turned out to be slovenly, slow, bumbling, and boring; he read his speech before a large group in a monotonous voice that was barely audible. Since then I have met a number of world- famous celebrities and have, more often than not, been disappointed in their attitudes, personalities, or behavior. Definite expectations were definitely not met.

(2) Half-wants, half-hopes, half-expectations

The second sort of satisfaction-dissatisfaction is more difficult to explain. It is not the case that the person will always be able to describe or know the desire or expectation beforehand that is fulfilled or unfulfilled. In some sense, they are not then perhaps desires or expectation at all; yet I will try to show shortly their sufficient resemblance to desires or expectations to give them similar names. In their negative (that is, dissatisfaction) aspects, one example is the kind of thing Betty Friedan referred to in *The Feminine Mystique* as the problem that has no name, and that Ryan's daughter, in the movie of that title, seemed to feel when, dissatisfied with her marriage, she answered the priest's question of what more she could possibly want with, "I don't know; I don't even know what more there is. But there must be something." Dissatisfaction of a half-hope or a ***half-expectation or half-desire*** often only presents itself as some vague dissatisfaction without one's being able to pinpoint the cause. Satisfaction of a half-desire may likewise only bring a welcome or good feeling for no identified reason or cause;

though sometimes it is easy after such a feeling to figure out the cause. I call these satisfactions and dissatisfactions those of half-desires, half-expectations, etc. rather than unexpected pleasures because, though the person himself or herself may not know they have such a desire, or may not know what it is, others might very easily be able to tell. The person may act almost as if they had a conscious desire or expectation, but simply not realize it themself. It may be, for example, that a child does not realize she would like a bicycle for her birthday, and were you to ask her what she wanted, she may not think of asking for a bicycle. Yet others notice how she seems (to feel) left out when other kids ride their bikes and how she lingers at department store bicycle displays though without it ever surfacing in her own mind that a bicycle is a possible gift or something that she would be much happier with if she had one. I am very difficult to buy presents for because if there is something I like that is affordable but not extravagant, I generally buy it for myself; and I do not like to be given expensive presents. But one Christmas I was given a box of stationery, something which triggered all kinds of good and appreciative feelings, since the couple who gave it to me showed better insight into my mind than I had. They knew I loved to write letters and that I had been doing so on typing paper. At that time stationery would have been something of a luxury for me, though it is not terribly expensive, and so I had put it out of my mind. And even when I tried to imagine gifts I might like to receive, I simply never thought of it. Yet when I opened the package, I realized immediately what a perfect and desirable gift it was for me.

There are other examples of the fulfilling of half-expectations or half-desires. One period in my life when I was on crutches, so many people seemed to go out of their way to ignore me and leave doors closed, or even let them slam in my face, when they might easily have helped instead, that I soon gave up any conscious ideas that people would hold open a door or offer to carry packages for me. Yet it was always disappointing when I was not helped, and very refreshing when I was. Or, I found that when I was an

undergraduate, girls were so routinely subjected to the kinds of dates where guys took them to a movie, then out for a pizza, hamburger, or ice cream, and then wanted to hold hands and progress to whatever sex they could "get" that the girls began to expect little else from their dates and so developed their defensive maneuvers. Hence, it was surprising and exciting for them when they went on a date with a fellow who wanted to talk about things on more than just a superficial level and who preferred a long sincere talk, in which you got to understand or know each other, to a movie or a makeout session.

Another reason that I want to call these pleasures or disappointments the satisfactions or dissatisfactions of half-wishes or half-expectation or half-desires instead of totally unexpected pleasures or totally unexpected disappointments is that there seems to be some (sort of) antecedent wish or desire or expectation, though not a conscious or known one, for the experience. It is not just an experience that pleases us out of the blue, as would the tax-free million dollar checks Michael Anthony used to bestow for John Beresford Tipton to totally unsuspecting and unexpecting people on the fifties' television fiction, *The Millionaire*. We find it welcome, for example, for someone else to be polite to us, though no one else has been in a while, because we still, in some sense, expect politeness of people, even though our expectations may have been dulled by recent experience. And similarly, some find it welcome when strangers will talk openly in a friendly and concerned way instead of at them (or superficially only, or not at all) although they almost give up the idea that strangers will do that, since so many will not. And the child finds her bicycle in some way quite welcome, and more so than she might find any other gift, even one surpassing it in monetary value, uniqueness, status, or fun because she in some sense wanted or hoped for a bicycle though perhaps she did not know it herself though everyone else did. And I call this sense a half-hope, half-wish, half- want, etc.

In one of my closest relationships, at one point there seemed to be

a problem which did not seem to rise quite to the surface. After a number of occurrences, it began to appear that my loved one and I would consistently have bad or semi-bad days the day after we would have a really great time together. At first there was really no notice of the correlation; it seemed more just like ups and downs of life in general or of relationships in particular. The bad days were not all that bad, no fighting or anything of that sort, just days in which we did not seem all that close or on the right wavelength with each other—just a vague feeling of disappointment or of distance.

Then, even after we noticed the pattern that these kinds of bad days followed the best days of our relationship, it still seemed somewhat out of our control. It seemed then perhaps we were simply ordained to have such a pattern and that the bad days were just like that because we had expectations that were too high because of the wonderful time of the previous day. We also thought it possible that the bad days were not so bad in themselves, but simply letdowns after the heights of the good days just before.

Still there was a nagging suspicion in my mind that this must be in our control, that there must be some specific cause of those particular bad days that we could eliminate. One day, it suddenly dawned on me what the problem was; and it seemed obvious then, once a few otherwise isolated facts were seen together in the particular perspective of this problem.

This was the first girlfriend that I had who did a great number of stylistic and also formal things according to etiquette. She would send store-bought "thank you" notes for even the simplest or most spontaneous gifts I gave her. Flowers in my apartment had to be arranged particular ways. If she entertained, even in the most informal circumstances, there was still a certain formality in the table arrangements, serving, etc. Furthermore, she always thanked me for the nice time she had when we had a nice time together and might even talk about it on the phone the next day. I invariably sloughed off such thanks with comments like the pleasure was all mine, or at least half mine, or just said that I had enjoyed it

immensely too, or that it really had been a great time. I always felt that any time we had a wonderful time together it was because of both of us, not just one of us, certainly not just me; it was because of the lucky way our two personalities meshed, not because of anything in particular that I had done—not anything that other people would have enjoyed as well as she did, but things that we both enjoyed together and to which we both contributed. I never felt the need to be thanked, and was always embarrassed by her thanking me. Furthermore, I would sometimes write poetry (to her) inspired by the good day, often even on that very day, or I would do or say things that showed I had been very pleased with the day. But I never was very formal about it nor did I dwell on it much afterwards in any sort of formal or particular way. To *thank* her or even mention appreciation for a nice time we had together on the day *before* seemed to be repetitive, unnecessary and in some way inappropriate. I just sort of expected to mention it nostalgically when appropriately reminded of the day and to go on from there to even better days, having each good day be a stepping stone to, or a part of, a supremely wonderful relationship.

But as all this just kind of came together one day in my mind, it was fairly obvious what was causing our bad days after the good days. Because I did not ever, in a formal or isolated way, express appreciation and happiness concerning the good day, on the next day, no matter how appreciative or happy I had seemed or said I was during that time, it made her feel that somehow it was not as important to me or as good for me, as it was for her. And she did not even realize she felt this way herself, or that this was the cause of her feelings. Once we discovered just how important formal expressions on succeeding days were to her, and therefore what my lack of them meant to her, I made a conscious effort to make such comments though it seemed somewhat unnatural to me; but also then when I failed to remember to do so, it provoked less anxiety on her part. I have always been one to show my enthusiasm or appreciation at the time, in a poem or just in my smile or spirits,

rather than to say things like "Gee, I really had a fine time," or "Yesterday was really a special day." I always just wanted a day to go on as a continuation from the previous one without thinking about demarcating one from the other and then expressing thanks or joy about the prior one as such.

At any rate, this was one particular example of what seems to fit my description of a half-wish or half- expectation which, when unmet or unfulfilled, caused a certain amount of frustration, disappointment, and anxiety. There was an element of expectation involved that was easy to see after the situation was unraveled, but difficult to see before. As soon as I explained my theory to my love, she agreed she was sure that was it, though she too had never realized what had been bothering her. My wife and I have a similar kind of half-expectations that cause a problem when we do not remember. It involves gift giving occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, etc. She likes to be asked what she wants and then to be given it. I don't like to be asked; I like to be surprised. But I don't like to be given things I need, like clothes or tools for the house. I like to get things that are inexpensive but fun or interesting to have, particularly that I might not think to buy for myself. She likes to be given things she either wants or needs, whether they are fun or not. Hence, we both forget periodically–I, to ask or to give a necessity; her, not to ask, or to give something inexpensive and unnecessary. (Also, I hate to give things that are expected; I like to give surprise gifts; so sometimes I hate to ask, even when I know I should.) Now, this is hardly a major problem; and it is not that we each go around thinking how much we want to be asked or not asked, but we each notice the disappointment immediately–I, when she asks me what I want; and she, when I surprise her with a wrong present.

(3) Unexpected Pleasures

The third sort of satisfaction-dissatisfaction factor is that of totally unexpected pleasures or surprises or of equally unexpected disappointments. Anything could happen here. One girl I know had been married for a few years before, while on a hike with another

couple, she learned for the first time that her husband was a knowledgeable birdwatcher. It was only in response to the other couple's speaking about the various birds they were seeing that he happened to show his knowledge for the first time around his wife. She was astonished. I read in a magazine one time about a woman who died but who had before that secretly stored loving and/or funny notes for various family members in places they were likely to find them after her death. I decided one did not need to die to make that an effective pleasant surprise, so one time on vacation from college, I left notes at home for my parents to find after I returned to school. For weeks, and in one case a whole year later, mother was finding the little hello's and funny messages I had hidden for her to find. She seemed to enjoy that.

Of course, some initially unexpected pleasures turn out to become expected or half-expected ones. Familiar is the lament, for example, that "you never bring me flowers any more like you used to," when the first batch of flowers might have been a total surprise. One might even come to expect the unexpected from a friend or mate who is continually providing unexpected pleasures. Further, of course, there can be unexpected disappointments or displeasures as when, say, one's mate or friend becomes terribly angry unjustifiably because of some frustration rather than because of anything the object of his wrath has actually done. Or one who is not given to asking for favors might find the one time they do ask, their partner is not very open to providing favors.

Depth of Satisfaction(s)

I have been writing mainly about the kinds and number of satisfactory or enjoyable things that may be involved in a relationship. But it is also important to remember that the amount of satisfaction depends not only on the number of satisfying or enjoyable or pleasing things that people do for each other, but also on how satisfying (that is, the depth of satisfaction or enjoyment) any given thing is.

For example, one couple might play tennis in the morning, visit

friends in the afternoon, go to dinner in the evening, then on to a movie, afterward make love, and finally retire for the night, awakening the next morning to a good breakfast. There might be a certain amount of joy and satisfaction in such a day for each of the partners. But suppose their tennis abilities and pleasure at tennis not that great; or suppose it was somewhat chilly while they played and that took some of the fun out of it. And suppose that the visit with their friends was pleasant but not exciting, that dinner was adequate but not superb, the movie cute but not particularly great, and the sex pleasurable but somewhat perfunctory. Suppose another couple (or this same couple on another day) spent (a part of) a day doing only one or two of these things, say, spent the whole day just talking and cuddling and making love and talking some more, or played the most fantastic tennis of their lives for four or five hours until they practically dropped from exhaustion. It makes sense to compare how much satisfaction each person or each couple had under these different circumstances, though, since we do not have precise pleasure measures, this would only be in rough estimates.

We can all think of days or times that were more satisfying, or less satisfying than others. Cleaning a marine latrine in the rain would certainly be less enjoyable than making a game winning touchdown for your team. Some movies or vacations are more enjoyable than others; some meals, some dates, and some football games better than others. Sex is better sometimes than at others. We ask our co-workers how their weekends were and we ask our spouses how their day was. We do not expect or desire an exact answer, but we expect some sort of rating or indication (great, lousy, boring, more fun than catching on fire, about as exciting as watching four-man bobsled races on television, on a scale of 1 to 10 it was an absolute 20). And that answer will depend not just on how many things they did (or that happened to them) that were enjoyable or disagreeable, but also on just how enjoyable or unpleasant each thing was. One or two extremely pleasant experiences might make a time more enjoyable than a lot of only slightly pleasant experiences. And one

or two extremely unpleasant experiences might make a time more unpleasant than a lot of only slightly unpleasant experiences.

A further distinction to be made is that of further subdividing (or being more specific about) activities. For example, it may not be that a person just wants to play tennis but that they want to play aggressive tennis or highly competitive tennis, or maybe just easy-going, knock the ball around a bit tennis. He or she may prefer singles, or may prefer doubles, that day; may even prefer mixed doubles, and/or some particular opponent, say, in a rematch. One may only want to work on his or her serve, maybe even just one particular kind of serve, even to a particular location.

Or one may not only want to have sex, but a specific kind of sex, say, lots of caressing foreplay, or very little foreplay (a "quickie"). One may want playful sex at one time, or teasing sex at another, or loving, tender, touching, quiet sex at another. One may want to be a more active partner or a more passive one (at one time or another), or to alternate roles, or may want both partners to be active simultaneously. One may want to seduce someone or to be seduced, or one may not want to "play (such) games." Some people might like their sex the same way each time; others, not.

One may not only want to listen to music at some particular time, but classical music; perhaps even a particular artist's recording of one particular adagio movement of a particular piano concerto; possibly even one particular recorded version by that artist in case there is more than one performance on record.

Hence, when you, I, or anyone speaks simply of tennis, sex, dining, dancing, poker, or whatever, you should keep in mind that these activities can be further subdivided or specified and that sometimes that could be important. Sex or tennis or conversation of one sort may not be the desired, expected, or satisfactory kind of sex, tennis, or conversation. People rarely describe their desires as specifically as they perhaps should, and sometimes they don't even realize themselves how specific those desires are. Then we disappoint them when we try to do what they said but not what they really

meant. Or they become frustrated or angry with us even though we were trying to be nice. For example, they suggest the two of you play some tennis; you think that means play hard and go all out to win; but they just wanted to knock the ball around a little bit to get some exercise and think you are just trying to show off or show them up.

Another thing to keep in mind in the area of satisfying actions is that sometimes it is not only what you say or do that is important, but your attitude and manner as well. For example, a grudging apology is virtually no apology. (I remember the time a maid who used to help my working mother once a week, with the ironing, scorched and ruined my absolute favorite T- shirt—she burned up the cotton bear that was sewn to the front of the shirt. I was five years old at the time; I was crushed. I told the maid she was stupid. My mother heard this, spanked me, and made me tell the maid I was sorry. Defiantly, and now really upset, I did— I told the maid I was sorry she was stupid! Somehow, as you might imagine, that did not count, and I got spanked again.) Sometimes we want someone not only to talk with us or to have sex with us, but to enjoy talking with us or having sex with us. That is why sometimes some people are so disappointed even though we did the activity we thought they wanted; we did not do it in the way or with the attitude or end result they wanted. One may want one's mate not only to attend a party or concert with them, but to want to attend, and not just to go, reluctantly and sullenly, "as a favor".

This sometimes makes for difficulties since one cannot always control one's attitudes. In one dramatic television movie after a girl had been raped, her boyfriend tried very hard to be supportive, but he was having all kinds of psychological difficulty adjusting to it himself. So even though he was saying kind things and being sympathetic to her, he also tried to be honest, and he could not disguise his own reactions. She became upset with him; and he was also hurt and said it was not fair that he not only had to say the right thing but that he also had to feel the right way too.

I knew one couple who had lived together for years but the

woman had for some time really wanted them to get married. But she wanted her mate to decide for himself that was what he wanted too, and then to suggest it to her, or ask her. So it was difficult for her and for her friends who knew this because no one wanted to "make" or pressure her mate to propose to her just to *do* the "right" thing; the right thing was not only something that had to be done, but something that had to be done with the right attitude.

It also makes for difficulties when, for example in sex, someone asks you what they should do (to please or arouse you), but what you want them to do is either to joyfully explore in order to figure it out themself, or to be spontaneous, inventive, creative, or imaginative; so telling them specifically would be self-defeating and counter-productive. Even just asking them to be imaginative or spontaneous may be self-defeating since in a sense you are still more or less having to guide their ideas and behavior even though not their specific actions. And it is not just their actions, but their state of mind as well that is important.

Reciprocity of Satisfaction Is Not Necessarily Having "Common Interests"

It would be a mistake to think having mutual satisfactions in a relationship means, or requires, having "common interests." Certainly people who enjoy the same kinds of things (the same kinds of movies, the same kinds of sports or games, the same kind of topics of conversation, or whatever) might find satisfactions in doing those things with each other. This may be particularly true if they are evenly matched in ability or knowledge. But it is not always the case that common interests will provide mutual satisfactions; and it is also not the only case.

One couple I knew both were avid and excellent golfers. Both enjoyed the game immensely, but not while playing it with each other. He could hit the ball much farther than she could. He could generally beat her, even though she had been women's champion of a fairly large city a number of times. They loved each other, and they loved golf, but they just did not enjoy playing golf with each other. This kind of case may even be more prevalent in tennis where

differences in ability and strength can often lead to monotonously similar results. And this might be just as easily true of two friends of the same sex as of husband-wife combinations. Two men (or two women) may both enjoy tennis, but just not with each other, even though they might perfectly well like each other or even enjoy being spectators together at tennis matches. Also, particularly in doubles, personality and team work are very important, and friction in those categories may override individual skills. Many couples know not to play mixed doubles with each other as partners for that very reason; it is far too easy to turn a tennis court into a divorce court. Two persons with the same interests simply may not like participating in those interests with each other, even though they may like each other considerably.

And of equal or greater importance, two people may get along quite satisfactorily where they are each getting something different from out of what they are doing together. Suppose one person is teaching another person something, whether it is golf, philosophy, engineering mathematics, making paper airplanes, preparing quiche, or whatever. One might get great joy out of teaching; the other, out of learning, even with no prior interest in the particular subject. Or suppose a couple has a day in which each lets the other do what they want, one plays tennis while the other works on a book they are writing. They can each be happy for the time and grateful for the opportunity and support. Or suppose one person likes to talk and another likes to listen. Or suppose a man likes to open doors for a woman and she likes to have doors opened for her. Or that one person likes to buy presents for another who likes to receive them (some people like to give presents more than they like to receive them). Or that a father likes to give piggy back rides to a child who delights in getting them. Or imagine a sadist and masochist (though the old joke is that when the masochist asks to be beaten, the sadist, in order to torment, refuses). Or suppose, as often happens in our society, that a husband enjoys being the breadwinner and his wife enjoys being domestic or enjoys doing women's auxiliary work

or enjoys supporting his work by making social contacts, throwing parties, entertaining clients at dinner, etc. These two might satisfy each other, though they do not have the same interests; it is just that their interests nicely mesh and are satisfying to each other as well as to themselves.

Even just considering an activity that both enjoy, such as caressing each other, there may be moments when one prefers to stroke the other person and the other person prefers to be stroked rather than do any stroking. Both may quite enjoy such a moment, though in different ways. Joys may be reciprocated or reciprocal without their therefore being the same joy or the joy of some common interest. Not having common interests will not necessarily prevent enjoyment of each other; and having them will not insure it.

In short, with regard to satisfactions and dissatisfactions then, you may be satisfied or dissatisfied in one or more ways, each to a stronger or lesser degree, by another's actions and/or feelings, actions and/or feelings that you either (1) expected or wanted (or expected or wanted not to happen), (2) half-expected or half-wanted (or half didn't want or expect), or (3) were not looking for or expecting in any way at all. And these actions or feelings may be satisfying or dissatisfying independently of whether you have any attraction or aversion to the other person or not, and independently of whether they stem from a common interest or not.

Key Takeaways

- Understanding better one's own desires and reactions to their fulfillment or lack of fulfillment.

Key Terms

- A***half-expectation or half-desire*** is the sort of wanting of something that one might not realize one wants as much as they do or would enjoy as much as they would (or find disappointing or upsetting to be thwarted or unfulfilled) but which is fairly obvious to other people who know them well, or that they themselves after finding the want met or thwarted realizes how important it is or has been to them.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What is important to remember in regard to the satisfaction-dissatisfaction scale?
- ***Question***: What are the three kinds of satisfactions or dissatisfactions?

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Chapter 6 The Goodness and Badness (Ethical) Aspect

Chapter 6 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Recognize that joy or happiness is not the only good, and in some cases not even a good thing.
- Indicate the qualities that make an act or relationship right or wrong, good, or bad.

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Insofar as pleasure, satisfaction, joy, contentment, happiness, etc. are good, and displeasure, grief, sorrow, disappointment, pain, etc. are bad, the satisfaction-dissatisfaction aspect of relationships is also a part of the goodness-badness aspect. But there is much more to life's goodness or badness than just satisfaction and happiness on one hand and dissatisfaction and unhappiness on the other hand. Therefore it is necessary to look at more in a relationship than whether it, or its individual acts, are satisfying or not, in order to determine whether over-all it is a good relationship or not.

In support of my claim that there is more to good and bad than just satisfaction and dissatisfaction, let me just say for now that certain pleasures seem better than others, and some pleasures, such as pleasures from watching or doing violence or vandalism, do not seem very good at all. When Jeremy Bentham first published his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, he was vigorously attacked for his seeming belief that the pleasure of a pig rolling about in the mud was equal in value to the pleasure of a person's playing chess or sculpting a work of art. We seem to think it all right for a child perhaps to have a good time playing in the

mud, but should we come across an adult getting the same sort of satisfaction out of making mud pies, we might, in certain cases, be entirely justified in our disappointment of him. Further, if pleasure was the only good to be sought, and if we wanted the best for our children, we should rear them not to be industrious, conscientious, intelligent, sensitive creatures, but should teach them to be just the opposite. They could be far happier if they were insensitive to tragedy and the sorrows of others, if they never aspired to goals which they might fail to attain, if they essentially came home from whatever untaxing jobs they might hold in order to be able mindlessly to watch whatever was on television and drink beer in a contentedly cheerful state. We could probably fairly easily train people to like these sorts of things, but we do not intentionally do that because we, correctly, believe people are capable of better ways of living, even if less pleasurable ways. Likewise, we tend to feel that excessive drunkenness and debauchery are not quite conditions to be strived for regardless of how carefree and fun they may be. And neither would we wish to revive the Roman gladiatorial spectacles of fights to the death or of throwing people to the lions for the gleeful entertainment of spectators. And I do not think it would be very humane or good to cater to such glee even by throwing dummies or robots to the lions in order to make the crowds think they were watching real mayhem. The pleasure of such crowds is an unsavory pleasure. And there is something unsavory about people watching wrestling, auto racing, boxing, football, hockey or whatever if they are watching simply in order to get a thrill out of the brutality and bloodiness instead of out of the athletic skills being displayed. There is something wrong about their happiness over this even if the players involved in the brutality themselves do not mind the aches and bruises and battles.

With regard to relationships in this matter, it would seem that a sado-masochistic relationship, if there are any such, would be bad in some way even if both partners enjoyed it fully. And a very common kind of relationship which many people decry and hope to eradicate is the kind of relationship where one partner (usually

the woman, in our society today) totally, or nearly totally, loses their personality or personhood into that of the other– a relationship in which one person's life, goals, work, and happiness depend on the other person's, rather than on anything they themselves seek, strive for, or achieve on their own. When it happens to a woman in a marriage, I tend to refer to it as the soppy, dependent housewife[1] syndrome. (I am not, of course, talking about all housewives, only those who give up their own identities, growth, abilities, aspirations, etc. in order to provide a nurturing environment for their sons and husbands.)

There are at least two bad sides to a soppy, dependent relationship, whether the dependent person is a man or a woman. First, from a practical standpoint, the death or incapacitation of the independent member of the relationship sometimes renders virtually helpless the dependent person. There may be severe financial problems if the survivor needs to work but has no marketable skills. Some women are so dependent on their husbands that they do not even know how to drive a car; some men cannot cook or do laundry. Some women have no idea how much money the couple has or where it is, what bills have to be paid and when, or even what kinds of insurance or hospitalization covers them. Sometimes there is not even the will to live; and sometimes this lack of will leads to illness or death within a relatively short time of the death of the mate. Short of that, sometimes the dependent person simply cannot find goals of their own even to strive for or cannot find any kind of happiness or joy of their own in life, since all that depended previously on the goals, desires, and happiness of their mate. I am not saying one should not be saddened or grieved over the loss or incapacitation of a loved one; I am not saying that certain joys in life might not be lost or greatly mixed with sorrows over not being able to share them (any more) with the loved one. I am saying that the period of crippling grief, if there is such a period, should not be a lifelong one. One might be terribly saddened by the loss of a loved one without thereby losing one's own life. This is the practical side or evil of

soppy dependence– of submergence of personalities, goals, and of independent efforts. And though I have spoken of loss through death or incapacitation, loss through divorce or break up can be almost, or just, as devastating and in the same kind of ways.

But I think there is a more philosophically important, though less practical, tragedy in soppy dependence even when there is no premature breakup, divorce, incapacity, or death. That tragedy is the waste or loss of a person, a human being; and the greater undeveloped potential they might have, the greater is the tragedy of their not developing, but wasting, that potential. To live one's life through children in the morning, soap operas in the afternoon, and a spouse in the evening is a terrible waste. And it is a waste even if the person doing it does not perceive it that way or does not feel the dullness of what Betty Friedan calls the problem with no name. It is a waste and a tragedy whether it is experienced as such or not. I am not talking here about the man or woman who is justifiably fulfilled at home, who delights in baking, sewing, rearing children, studying, writing, inventing, etc. because they are creative at it, find it challenging, and find time and energy to do growing and self-developing, self-fulfilling things while being at home. I am talking about the person who has given up their own identity for that of another person's, about the person who lives their life some way because they do not know of any other way and so have not chosen their life but have settled for it by default. I am talking about the person who is wasting (unknown) talents that, developed, would make them more human, more alive, more fulfilled, and possibly even more excited and happy about life.

Soppy dependent people are not always those who have given their identity to their mate. They may have lost it to the "company store," some religious cult, a bureaucratic mentality, or a drug habit. But far too many soppy dependent people are so because of their marriage; and many of these are women. But it does not have to be this way. There is nothing inherent in relationships or in love that requires loss of self, loss of personal development, loss of independence. In fact, I will argue later that a good relationship

is beneficial to both parties, not just one. It has just been cultural norms that have tended, in our society, to stifle women (in particular) in terms of the way they have been required to act as wives. (Though, as I revise this edition, many women, in discarding dependence, have also gone to the other, equally unnecessary, wasteful and distressing, extreme and discarded any relationships that might require reasonable, legitimate, and humane obligations.)

Later, I will discuss ethics and some ideas for determining the goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness, of acts and relationships. Ethics need not be a difficult or esoteric subject. Let me just say here that we do, in our daily lives, judge things to be good or bad and acts to be right or wrong, and that we do so on more than a simple pleasure-pain or satisfaction- dissatisfaction basis. And though we do not generally consider ourselves philosophers, many of our judgments about what is good or bad, right or wrong, involve fairly complex and sophisticated (though that is sometimes unrealized) notions. To some extent it is the job of philosophers to identify and analyze those notions, and that is part of what I will try to do in the section on ethics.

[1]By the soppy, dependent housewife I do not mean every housewife, but only those for whom the role is stifling, non-stimulating, and/or a hindrance to realization of better potentials. And I am not advocating by any means that working in today's market place is necessarily better than being a housewife. There are many jobs whose only merit is the money they provide; yet that merit is more than diminished by the toll those jobs take in the time and energy they drain from the person doing them, preventing that person from fulfilling better, more meaningful potentials. Women's liberation has been a disappointment to me because in too many cases women have not become liberated, but have become simply shackled to new roles and new jobs which are equally stifling of their better capacities, though they may pay more money. Women (and men) who have to channel their primary efforts into selling services or products which are of no real benefit to society are

often no personally better off than people who clean house, watch soap operas, read inferior fiction, gossip with neighbors, chauffeur children to school, baseball practice, and ballet lessons, and entertain at dinner or parties uninteresting business clients of their husbands.

There is nothing inherent in rearing children or being a spouse or staying home to do homemaking chores that makes one have to give up one's personality and personal pursuits, or that requires those pursuits to be inane. A housewife can improve her mind or learn important skills. I had hoped, and still hope, that women's liberation would bring more opportunity for women, and men, to be able to pursue the kinds of things that would benefit and enrich their lives, whether it makes them wealthier or not. A housewife who reads good literature and who is rewarded by reflection on it, a mother who creatively teaches her children and imaginatively stimulates their development, a housewife who creates beautiful things, a housewife who learns and grows and teaches what she has learned, these people are far better off than the woman, at whatever salary, whose potentials for excellence are being stifled by any employer, job, or husband. In the ethics chapter (26) I mention some of the kinds of things that have been said to add to the goodness of life. Any job, relationship, or situation that helps people's lives improve in these or other ways is, to that extent, a beneficial relationship. In seeking a good relationship, one is seeking a relationship that is beneficial; and this sometimes involves more than just being satisfying. And in seeking a loving relationship, you are not only seeking a partner who is attracting and satisfying, but one who is also good for you (and for whom you are attracting, satisfying, and good).

I think John Stuart Mill gave perfect expression to the sentiment that people so often simply put, or find, themselves in positions that waste their talents when he said in his book *Utilitarianism*:

"Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences but by mere want

of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupations to which their position has devoted them, and the society into which it has thrown them, are not favorable to keeping that higher capacity in exercise. Men lose their high aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict themselves to inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them, but because they are either the only ones to which they have access or the only ones which they are any longer capable of enjoying. It may be questioned whether anyone who has remained equally susceptible to both classes of pleasures ever knowingly and calmly preferred the lower, though many in all ages, have broken down in an ineffectual attempt to combine both." (Warnock, 1965)

Unfortunately it has worked out that many women have equated not being a soppy, dependent housewife with going to work. What I suspect many of the pioneers of the women's movement would have wanted instead was that women simply be allowed and be able to pursue whatever worthwhile course would be good, whether it was employment or not. Much of the complaint was that perfectly good minds, some with perfectly good educations, were going to waste. Well, this is also true of men who work. Most jobs, as things are now, are not particularly edifying, enlightening, or stimulating. That is equally true for men as for women. Men's minds and men's educations are often just as wasted and just as repressed as those of housewives who subordinate their identities and capacities to their husbands and children. Women who go to work at a job just to make money or just to achieve financial independence or just to see that they can do a job, are not going to fare much better. Although a restroom wall scrawl I once saw is generally true: "It is better to be rich and healthy than it is to be sick and poor," money is not necessarily the measure of the good life. I have a friend who says Americans seem to confuse convenience with quality, and I believe it was Disraeli who once said: "Americans mistake comfort for civilization." In a similar vein, I would hope women, and men, would not mistake (apparent) financial security and a nice,

comfortable, efficient house managed by an uninspiring, soppy, dependent housewife as the greatest lifestyle to be sought, and I would hope they also would not mistake employment alone for either liberation or civilization. Minor satisfactions, creature comfort, and money that are earned at great personal cost, and at the expense of things of higher value are not what people ought to seek or to settle for. (Return to text.)

Key Takeaways

- Realize that some joys can be bad in addition to the goodness of the pleasurable feelings they provide, and that in some cases the harm or wrong done by an act or relationship can seriously outweigh the good that comes from its joy, satisfaction, or pleasure.
- Realize that ethics and right and wrong or good and bad are not as simple as they may have seemed.

Key Terms

- ***Soppy dependence*** refers to a relationship in which one person's life, goals, work, and happiness depend on another person's, rather than on anything they themselves seek, strive for, or achieve on their own. This can occur from a personal relationship (such as in a marriage), from the goals of an employer or supervisor in a workplace, or from the general

culture.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question:*** What are some ramifications for the dependent individual in a soppy dependent relationship?
- ***Question:*** What is considered a good relationship?

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Chapter 7 Independence of the Three Aspects of Relationships

Chapter 7 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain how the three aspects of love are independent of each other.

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Attractions, satisfactions, and the general or ethical value of relationships are independent of each other in the sense that people can, and do, sometimes become attracted to people who do not bring them much pleasure or who are not necessarily good for them, just as they sometimes do not become attracted to people whose actions they do enjoy and/or who are good for them. Of course, sometimes people do become attracted to people whose actions are good and/or satisfying, sometimes perhaps even because of that. Sometimes it can be particularly easy to become attracted to someone who treats you kindly, especially when that kindness is most needed. Yet sometimes people become attracted to others while knowing little or nothing about how satisfying or dissatisfying, good or bad, their character or actions might be; some instant attractions are like that.

Sometimes one becomes attracted to someone before discovering the other person is not good for them or displeases them; and yet the attraction may persist, simply because attractions are not

always governed by rationality nor, once acquired, are they easily dispelled. (In the worst cases, they may even seem to be the work of spells.)

Sometimes people even become attracted to those they already know are bad for them or to those whose actions they know displease them. Why this is, I do not know. In some cases perhaps, it is to reform the other person or win them over out of some sense of challenge. Perhaps sometimes they become involved after feeling they are safe from involvement with such a person. Perhaps they become attracted because they can do so and yet still remain somewhat aloof, unconcerned, or uncommitted. Perhaps some people need to feel unhappy in their love life or can only be sexually attracted to someone they do not (otherwise) respect. But I am not particularly concerned here with the rationale, only with the fact that emotions, benefits, and happiness in relationships can be independent of each other in the sense that (1) people can and sometimes do become or stay attracted to people who do not make them happy or who are not good for them, and sometimes even to people who make them miserably unhappy or who are very bad for them, and/or (2) sometimes people do not become or stay attracted to those who are good for them or in whose company they are often happy. Also, (3) whether you are attracted to them or not, people can make you happy who are not otherwise in general or overall good for you; and (4) people who are good for you may not be very satisfying to you.

Further, though often you do tolerate or even come to enjoy with a loved one activities that you could not tolerate or like with someone you had no attraction for, it also sometimes happens that activities you could accept with regard to anyone else you cannot tolerate in a loved one. For example, say a person thinks golf is a waste of time and finds it hard to relate to people who spend lots of time on the golf course and who seem to be preoccupied with it. But if that person becomes tremendously attracted to someone who it turns out enjoys golf, he might even find himself taking up the game and enjoying playing it with his beloved. But in other cases,

just the opposite may occur, in that one may tolerate the golfing of people one does not care about, but hate to see someone they love "wasting" their time and energy at the game.

Sometimes it is the like or dislike of an activity that influences the feelings one has for another. Jones may be unable to grow to like anyone who plays golf or smokes or.... On the other hand, if Jones does play golf, he may become terribly attracted to a girl who can keep up with him on the golf course. We often find ourselves attracted to someone because something they do pleases us. There are some times that we are more vulnerable to this than others. When one feels rejected or lonely, a person who smiles or listens with understanding and sympathy can be very attracting. When one has been unable to find companions who share some important interests, ideas, knowledge, or values, finding such a person may arouse strong feelings of attraction, if not just gratitude, for them.

But, as I have said, not all cases of attraction are like this, and this may make one wonder whether even in these cases attraction arises because of compatibility and benefit or simply beside it.

The independence of benefits from a relationship and any attraction in it can be exemplified by the case of people who learn from teachers or other adults to whom they may not be particularly attracted.

Further evidence for the ***independence of feelings*** from what is enjoyable or unenjoyable and from what is good or bad are the dual phenomena of (1) having different feelings toward people from whom you may get the same satisfactions or dissatisfactions and (2) getting the same kinds of feelings from people who give you satisfactions or dissatisfactions that are different. Likewise, (1) getting different feelings about people who do equally good or bad things for you and (2) getting the same kinds of feelings about people who are different in the amount of good and bad they provide you.

In this last case, one might have strong feelings of attraction for people it is most painful to be around and even for people

who intentionally treat them badly. But one might also have strong feelings of attraction for someone who treats them much better. Or one might fall in love with someone who treats them very nicely at first, and remain highly or passionately attracted even after that person no longer behaves so kindly.

Or consider two people who treat you equally well and with whom you do things together that are equally good. Or two people whose company you enjoy very much. You still might have very different kinds of feelings toward them. One might be a dearly loved one for whom you have all sorts of feelings of attraction whereas the other might be described as a good friend, whose company and behavior might be very nice, but who is not a person for whom you feel passion or desire. Sometimes one may have a great conversation with an acquaintance and enjoy it very much, just as one might with a longtime friend or with a lover; it is not the joy of the conversation that is different with each of these people, but the surrounding feelings or emotions.

There may be people who do not treat you badly, but around whom you quite often have a terrible time anyway. You may still be attracted to that person. You may hate yourself for going to see them or for going out with them and each time resolve that will have been your last such time, yet not be able to keep that resolution.

There may be or may seem to be connections at times between the joy or good you get from someone and the feelings you have toward them and vice versa, but, based on the above evidence, that causal connection, if it exists, certainly seems to be indirect or quite complicated. For example, the fellow whose girlfriend taught him to play and enjoy golf might not have been able to do so had he not liked her; but perhaps other girls he had liked tried to persuade him before and were unable to; and perhaps he didn't even like some girls just because they played golf. At times, just having a person introduce themself with a smile will brighten your whole day and make you almost instantly infatuated with them; but at other times you may simply feel you are being put upon by them. And there are instances of people feeling differently toward two very similar

people (in some cases, even identical twins) who seem to others to be alike in almost all respects. The attracted one may be sure there is some difference, say a twinkle in the eye, even when no one else can see the difference.

Scenario 2: Imagine your dream mate (she or he) may be your fantasy. Imagine again that your ideal mate, the person you think you want, may not be the person that you need. How do you balance your fantasy with reality?

The Happy Couple

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Even strangers for whom you have no feelings may provide goodness and/or satisfactions. There is the Mary Worth comic strip kind of relationship of the kindly stranger who helps you with a personal problem; it actually happened to me once. I had taken a long train trip to see a girl I had met the year before, had become immediately attracted to, and had since frequently and passionately

corresponded with by mail and spoken with by long distance on the phone. When I finally got to visit her, it was evident something was bothering her. She had a new boyfriend and had just not been able to bring herself to tell me. I was crushed. On the train ride back I began talking with an older lady seated next to me, told her what had happened, and felt better just because she understood and was sympathetic and said just the right kinds of reassuring things to make me feel not quite so alone, unusual, or inadequate. Yet I did not become attracted to her; I didn't even learn her name.

Others have their own "Mary Worths". A girl I met one time who had grown up and gone to school in Tuskegee talked about an old woman who lived in a house next to a vacant lot where many little kids played. Every day this woman brought out lemonade and cookies for those kids even though she was no relation to any of them. This girl had been one of those kids, and one of her hopes for herself as a person was that someday she would do the same kinds of thing for kids who would play near where she would live. She has no idea who that woman was.

One day I was walking to campus alone in the early morning when a girl in a Volkswagen Beetle drove by. I saw her coming from about half a block away and started to peer in to get a better look at her. You know how guys do. Anyway, at the time I stared in, I found her staring out, her head turned around – to check me out. Usually two people catching each other doing this both get embarrassed and turn away immediately, but somehow or other our moods in this case were both one of being pleasantly surprised and flattered, and instantaneously we each grinned at catching each other and being caught by each other, then cherishing those simultaneous grins, we each waved and kept on going our opposite directions, never knowingly to see each other again. Yet that brief second was one that to this day still makes me smile and feel good.

In the television play *Silent Night, Lonely Night*, the part played by Lloyd Bridges is that of a man whose wife is in a mental hospital, unable to do much but stare into space. Their only child had

drowned. He says at one point that his mother always said the best part of a meal was sharing it, but he says that Christmas eve he finds best shared with strangers, not friends. He cannot bear to be with friends who know his sorrow and who, he feels, obligatorily have him over to try to cheer him up. He would rather spend that particular time with someone who does not know of his sadness and the particular melancholy that comes with Christmas and the new year.

And at times, even in the best of relationships, a new acquaintance, one who you may have little if any feelings for at the time, may be somebody it is more enjoyable to be around than your partner. Suppose one simply wants just to talk with someone to make them laugh or feel good.

Suppose your spouse or best friends already know all your funny jokes or deepest thoughts or most poignant stories, and you know theirs. What then might be very meaningful to a stranger most probably would just be repetitively boring to those you most care about. One simply cannot always have new and stimulating thoughts for friends or loved ones. Even the voluminous and creatively staggering works of Beethoven and Shakespeare could be performed in a two or three month period. One can imagine hearing a shrewish spouse or lover or an insensitive friend say even to them something like "But I have already heard this; can't you come up with something new?!" So if you are in a mood to talk and please and you have no new thoughts or jokes for old friends, sometimes you must find new friends for your old jokes or ideas. Or find an old friend you have not seen since discovering some of those new ideas.

In fact, often what makes the reacquaintance of old flames or old friends so exciting is that you have the best of both worlds – the bond and understanding of a longtime relationship and the excitement and freshness of a new relationship; you have interesting new things to discuss with each other but without having to start to get to know each other from scratch, learning about each others' characters and personalities. It is like meeting

a fresh and exciting new person but without having to start from the beginning – without having to play any games, put on any airs, explain about yourself, sort through any trivia, or go through any sort of settling process.

Another example of the independence of feelings (particularly of passion or sexual attraction), joys, and benefits is the fact that people with particular sexual inclinations, whether heterosexual or homosexual, are not likely to become passionately or sexually attracted to anyone outside that interest no matter how happy the other person makes them or how good they are for them. Most people simply feel differently about men and women no matter how much they might enjoy or benefit from either. There was a perverse cartoon that traded on something like this one time – two homosexual fellows are in a bar talking to each other when a particularly exciting looking woman, provocatively attired, walks in. They both captivatedly stare at her and finally one of them says to the other, "Gee, that's enough to almost make you wish you were a lesbian."

But, even apart from sexual inclinations, the point remains that we can become attracted to people who treat us well or ill or both, to people we enjoy or not, or both. And we can enjoy or be treated well by people to whom we do not necessarily become attracted, whether emotionally, sexually, romantically, or physically.

And, apart from any sort of attractions, we can enjoy the company of people who are not good for us – children and adolescents often become friends with people who lead them "astray". Adults, particularly in some vulnerable states, are also susceptible though they may be more circumspect than inexperienced children. And we often do not enjoy or find pleasure from people, such as some teachers or parents, who may be very good to us and very good for us, but whose benefit to us we do not understand or appreciate. Quite often, just as the taste of foods is inversely proportional to their nutrition, and just as the most fun activities are not always the most beneficial ones, the most enjoyable people are not always the ones whose company is best for us.

Key Takeaways

- Recognize that you can be attracted, and even remain attracted, to someone who is not good for you or even very enjoyable or satisfying for you.
- Understand that you can find someone enjoyable not good for you but you may also find someone who is good for you not satisfactory.

Key Terms

- Further evidence for the***independence of feelings*** from what is enjoyable or unenjoyable and from what is good or bad are the dual phenomena of (1) having different feelings toward people from whom you may get the same satisfactions or dissatisfactions and (2) getting the same kinds of feelings from people who give you satisfactions or dissatisfactions that are different.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question:*** What does the book refer to as the 3

aspects of relationships?

- ***Question:*** What is a "*Mary Worth*" type of relationship?

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Chapter 8 The Meaning of Love

Chapter 8 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Examine the plausibility of the initial definition of love and the three elements that can help one analyze and evaluate all relationships, whether they involve love or not.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to see what other people feel that love is.

With the previous chapters about feelings, satisfactions, and ethics as prologue, I will try to show that it is plausible to mean by "A loves B" that:

(1) A has strong feelings of attraction in general, or to some reasonable extent, for B,

(2) A, in general or to some reasonable extent, enjoys B (that is, A in general or to some reasonable extent is satisfied by B and by the things B does), particularly in areas of psychological importance (or meaningfulness) to A, and without particular disappointment or dissatisfaction in other such psychologically important (meaningful) areas, and

(3) B is good for (or to) A; that is, the things B does are good for A.

[This last condition will be stated more correctly after the section on ethics, but for now, this is a sufficient statement of the ethical content of a love relationship.]

To say then that A and B love *each other* is to say that 1, 2, and 3 are reciprocal – that A and B both have strong feelings of attraction

for each other in general, that in general they satisfy (or enjoy) each other, and that they are good for each other.

Some remarks about the analysis:

Notice that the criteria are stated in terms of what actually is the case, not in terms of what A or B, or anyone else, believes to be the case. Insofar as one believes A and B are attracted to each other, satisfy each other, and are good for each other, one will believe A and B love each

other; but if one is wrong in any of those beliefs, one is then also wrong about their loving each other. This is true even if the believer is A or B themself. Certainly people can be mistaken about whether the above conditions actually are met and whether they are in love; and many times people have said things like: "I thought I loved him, but I know now I was just infatuated." One easy way someone might mistakenly believe they are in love is to incorrectly think the other person is good for them just because they enjoy that person's company and are deeply attracted to them. Hence, in the kind of case mentioned earlier where a parent and child disagree about whether the child really is in love with someone or not, a parent might point out specifically why he or she thinks the other person is not good for the child. Or the child may be unknowingly neglecting things important to its well-being because of the relationship. The

parent would have to point out what this is specifically and hope the child will understand it and believe it in order to see the point. This, of course, is not always easily accomplished; but it at least gives better focus to the disagreement than just continually simply disagreeing about whether it is "really love" or not. In such a case, there is not a disagreement about what love is; there is a disagreement about whether it exists – whether the conditions that constitute it all apply. The child believes the conditions (1-3 above) for love are met; the parent believes not all of them are. The discussion should be focused on the particular condition that is the center of disagreement. Just (incorrectly) believing the conditions are met does not make them so, and does not mean you are in love; it only means you (incorrectly) think you are.

The analysis puts love on a continuous scale or on many different continuous scales – one scale for the amount of each kind of attraction-aversion, satisfaction-dissatisfaction, and benefit-harm, with "sums" or overall balancing points or impressions in each of these areas; and I think love is that way. We do think in terms of loving one person more than another, of love growing, of love becoming stronger or weaker or fading or dying out. By my analysis or criteria, "A loves B more than A loves C" any time that:

(1) A has stronger feelings for B than for C (and/or, more strong feelings),

(2) any time that A is satisfied more by B than by C (and more in areas of psychological importance to A), and/or

(3) B is better for (to) A than C is; the things B does are better for A than the things C does, [as long, of course, as there is not some equal or greater loss in one or both of the other two areas]. Likewise, A's love for B can grow or diminish in time as there is growth or diminution in the feelings of attraction, satisfaction, and goodness of the relationship.

When one aspect of the relationship increases and another decreases, it is then perhaps difficult to say whether the love has grown or not. For example, A might have stronger feelings of attraction toward B than before, but might find fewer satisfactions in the relationship or might find fewer things good for himself or herself than before. Just in the area of satisfaction alone, A might become more deeply satisfied in some areas over time, but have fewer different areas of satisfaction than before. By my criteria or definition then it might be difficult to say whether the love is stronger or weaker; but this is all right since it reflects the difficulty one has in ordinary usage of the term love as well anyway in such cases. Yet even then my criteria or analysis has the benefit of allowing specific ideas and communication about how the relationship has changed (or how different relationships differ). And it also allows for greater specific description in comparing relationships (to others, or to themselves through time) as to which

is more loving when one person loves the other more but the other loves the first less.

In such cases, nothing is lost by my use of the word *love*, but much is gained by conceiving and communicating about relationships in these primary aspects of feelings, joys, and benefits, since one can say precisely how a relationship has changed or how two relationships differ (for example, more or stronger attraction of a certain specified sort, but less joy of a certain specified sort) and thereby use that to point out why it is difficult or impossible to say whether love has grown or diminished or in which relationship it is greater. In many cases of marriage, for example, certain kinds of sexual attraction may diminish over time for one partner while emotional attraction or a different kind of sexual attraction may increase.

In the analysis, I use the word ***strong*** and the phrases "in general" and "to some reasonable extent". It is difficult, if not impossible, to say how much attraction, satisfaction, and/or good there must be. Certainly there has to be more than just a slight attraction, slight satisfaction, and slight goodness (and the more, the better) for saying there is love. There are other concepts in ordinary language that are like love in this regard of becoming less well defined in borderline cases – how much money is required to be rich, how little hair does one need to be bald, how little dirt does laundry need in order to be clean. It is easy to distinguish the very rich from the very poor, the very hairy from the very bald, the very loving from the very hateful. In many areas of classification, borderline cases may be difficult to distinguish or classify, but not all cases are borderline, and so distinction and classification are often possible and useful. But more useful than classification in cases, such as the amount of love in a relationship, is being able to specify in what ways love exists or what more is needed or is important to improve the relationship or make it more loving, perhaps particularly if some purpose like marriage, living together, sex, child-bearing, or divorce is under consideration.

Love changing: There are a number of ways to satisfy a person more – (1) doing more things that are satisfying, (2) doing the same (number of) things but in a more satisfying way, or (3) satisfying them in more areas of psychological significance or importance (meaningfulness) to them, (4) satisfying them more deeply in such areas, or (5) any combination of the above, without some equal or greater decrease in one or more of them. (Similar, but opposite, with regard to less satisfaction.) My analysis does not make any distinctions for comparing amount of change or amount of difference in love when comparing couples, or one couple at different times, when the depth of satisfactions is different from the number of satisfactions; but I do not think this is any different from our inability to make intuitive comparisons in such cases ordinarily. If there are two couples, one of which enjoys doing more kinds of things together, but the other of which, though doing fewer things, enjoys them more, we do not often find it necessary or even possible to describe one as therefore being more loving than the other. Or the same if one couple through time changes in a way that has them doing fewer satisfactory things together but has them enjoying more the things they do together.

Likewise with regard to improving or impairing (the goodness of) a relationship or in comparing the goodness of two relationships. It is difficult or impossible to say whether one relationship at different times is better or worse, or whether one relationship is better or worse than another, when the difference is between doing more good things that are each less valuable or fewer good things that are each better. At least this analysis lets you describe the differences quite specifically, even if you cannot use the simplistic general label "better" or "worse".

With regard to the change of feelings, one may develop deeper (or less intense) feelings of one sort toward another, or one may develop more (or fewer) kinds of feelings of attraction (such as intellectual, emotional, magically romantic, sexual, brotherly, maternal, paternal,...).

Or some sorts of attraction may grow in intensity while others

diminish. As in the cases of joys and other benefits, when changes occur in opposite directions at the same time, for example, more emotional attraction but less enchantingly romantic attraction, it is not particularly easy or possible to compare, simply in terms of the word *love* alone, whether love has grown or diminished. Similarly, it is difficult or impossible to compare which is more loving of two different relationships where the only difference is that one contains deeper feelings than another which contains more different kinds of feelings of attraction.

Still, it is in this area of love's changing – or in comparing how a relationship is with how it could be better or with how it should be – that the analysis is the most fruitful, I believe. It is not so important that we are able to identify a relationship as one of love or not as it to be able to tell how to improve a relationship or how to make it more loving. It is important that we are able to perceive in what areas (goodness, joy, attraction) our relationships are strong and in what areas they are flawed or weak. And it is important that we are able to understand in each of these areas what specific kinds and quantities of attractions, joys, and benefits exist, especially ones that are important, and which ones are missing, especially ones that are important.

In writing before of being attracted "in general", of being satisfying "in general" or "to some reasonable extent", and of being good to one another, it was certainly difficult or impossible to specify how frequent or intense attraction and satisfaction should be or how much dissatisfaction or bad can be in a relationship for us to (still) call it love. I think there are extremes we would clearly want to call loving or unloving relationships. Some of the middle regions we might hesitate to characterize. The idea then of the continuous scales for each kind or area of satisfaction-dissatisfaction, attraction- aversion, benefit-harm is more important here. For it is usually not too difficult to point out how a relationship could be more loving – could be better for the partners and/or more satisfying and/or more full of feelings of attractions. It is easier

to specify what there is and what there could be and what there should be in terms of the kinds, quantity, and balance of satisfaction, attraction, and goodness than it is to specify whether there is sufficient satisfaction, goodness, and attraction to call it love. Labeling a relationship as being a loving one or not is not as accurate or as meaningful in many cases as pointing out what kinds, frequency, and depth of attractions, satisfactions, and goodness it has and what kinds it lacks, and how important this is. Simply to label a relationship as one of love or not is not to be as clear as one could be about it, nor really to provide much specific information about it at all.

It is less likely to point out problem areas or areas of potential improvement; and it is not likely to help people be able to make a relationship become more loving when they want it to be. It is generally better simply to state where on the different ladders or continuous scales of satisfaction, attraction, and goodness the relationship is, where it is going, and where it should be or where you would like it to be. This framework for viewing relationships and thinking about love will allow problem areas or areas of disagreement to be more easily spotted, communicated, discussed, and, where necessary, debated.

No longer need there be unproductive, idle disputes over whether she loves him or not; loves him enough or not; or whether their love is strong enough to get them through some difficult time or other. One will not have simply to introspect about how one *feels* to answer such questions. There will be more valid, more easily answered, more fruitful questions to ask; for example, how strong are the feelings of attraction; in what areas; in what areas (sexual, intellectual, physical, etc.) are they lacking; what kinds of pleasure or joys does each lover get; how strong are they; how important are they to them; which kinds are lacking or weak; how reciprocal is the relationship in these terms; what areas of joy are likely to dwindle or increase with time and probable circumstances; how is each person good for the other, or bad; how is that likely to change in time or different likely circumstances. These are the more important kinds

of questions and yet are also more easily answered than "Do I love him/her?" especially for determining such things as marriage, child bearing, continued dating, steady dating, living together, having sex, etc.

The question of whether to marry or not can be asked, not just in terms of "Do we love each other enough?" but in the more realistic and fruitful questions of, are we good enough to each other, do we make each other happy enough, and would we under the conditions of living together or having children or spending all the time together married people often do. What would we need to improve along those lines? Could we improve that? Are we attracted enough, satisfying enough, and good enough to each other on a day-to-mundane-day basis to make marrying worthwhile? How important is it to get married versus continuing unmarried, or continuing to wait to find someone with whom one might have a better or more loving relationship? What are the odds of finding such a better relationship at this time in one's life? Are the odds worth the wait? Would a possibly temporary and/or childless marriage be beneficial at this time given our goals, wants, and the quality of the relationship? What are the legal differences concerning things like estate inheritance, etc. between being married and living together? The emotional differences? Etc., etc., etc.

I have two friends, now married, who lived together for four or five years before that. At first, they were both afraid of marriage for different reasons. Later, she wanted to be married, but only if he wanted to. He sort of did; but inertia seemed to keep him putting it off. They both made fairly good salaries and had a number of joint assets, yet those assets were not in joint names, and neither had a will or agreement listing who owned what or in what proportions. Luckily nothing happened to either of them before they married; but it seemed to me that their situation is one that marriage simply made better – not in terms of joy or emotions, but in terms of doing things that were right for each other in purely legal terms. They probably could have effected this sort of change through contracts,

wills, and accurate record and receipt keeping, but marriage was an easier way and there was no particular reason in this case other than inertia and the unwarranted fear that the relationship would somehow change in other ways if it were legalized. I suspect that there are not even hospital family visiting privileges or decision-making rights for long time lovers not married. In their particular case, because they had, after the first few years of living together at least, every intention of living just like married people for as far in the future as they could see, it seemed better and simply easier from a legal and societal viewpoint for them to marry. Here was a case where just talking about "love" would not have been particularly helpful in deciding what they should do; they knew how they felt about each other and how much they enjoyed each other; what they needed to consider was how fair they were being toward each other, particularly in case of accident, illness, or death.

Universality of this analysis

This analysis is meant to apply to *all* relationships and all loving relationships, not just ones that are romantic (in the general sense). Certainly there are appropriate and right or wrong ways for parents to treat children, children to treat parents or brothers and sisters, for people to treat friends or even strangers, employers, employees, customers, sales people, doctors, patients, clients, etc.

Ethics concerns some of this; emotions do also, for how we feel about people often determines some of the appropriate behavior toward them and some of the kinds of joys we can derive. It is a legal and/or biological link that makes someone, say, our child, but it is a kind of feeling we have about a person that makes us feel about them in some maternal or paternal way, or not, whether they are our child or not. Being a spouse is a legal designation that may or may not coincide with being in love. Marriage and love can each be a contributing factor toward determining what is proper behavior. One has obligations toward even a spouse one may not love; and loving someone in some cases justifies treating them in a special way that would otherwise be unfair to others. Even incest prohibition involves both an ethical or societal and legal component

as well as an emotional component; and it seems to me that the legal or cultural prohibitions against incest (which are different in different cultures to some extent) do not prevent it as significantly as the fact that it is normally very difficult to be sexually attracted to someone whose diaper you used to change and whose nose you had to keep wiping, or to someone who made you eat peas, come in when you wanted to stay out, go to bed when you wanted to stay up and get up when you wanted to sleep in, or with a sibling who provided, as you grew up together, numerous disagreements and disappointments. That so many of the stories in literature which deal with romantic or marital incest, such as Oedipus, concern partners who do not know their biological relationship because of early separation, is probably not accidental.

At any rate, all relationships can be analyzed in terms of feelings, joys, and ethics, so though I will be dealing in many cases with romantic relationships, what I have to say will often not be limited to them. There are right and wrong ways to treat people whatever your (lack of) relationship to them (and some of these ways are common to all relationships) and certainly there are joys and satisfactions or dissatisfactions and grievances or grief that people can give each other no matter what their legal, biological, or social relationships are. Most of the kinds of things I will have to say will be generalizable or transferrable though many of the particulars will concern relationships where the feeling of attraction is primarily romantic (in general) in nature.

And by romantic in general, I do not necessarily mean to imply nor to deny the existence of feelings that are passionate, magical, or stirring, but simply to distinguish the kind of love people have that is not parental, brotherly, etc. Romantic love in this (general) sense may involve attractions that are emotional and/or sexual and/or intellectual. They may be of great excitement and passion or they may not be. It is meant to embrace passionate lovers as well as those people whose love for each other is of a more sedate or quiet nature. All are the kinds of relationships with which so

many magazine articles, romantic movies, plays, stories, and advice columns are concerned.

W. Newton-Smith, in an article called "A Conceptual Investigation of Love" in Alan Montefiore's *Philosophy and Personal Relations*, talks of paradigm cases such as Romeo and Juliet, Abelard and Heloise, and Caesar and Cleopatra to describe the kinds of love relationships he is talking about. I am not that sure I know how these people felt or acted toward each other but I think Newton-Smith gets the point across that he means to talk about the kind of relationships that I call "romantic" in the general sense. However, he goes on to make what I think is an error in trying further to describe this kind of love in order to make clear he is not speaking of cases of parental or other sorts of non-romantic love. I think his paradigm cases perhaps mislead him to this error, but it is an error many people make without that excuse. He writes "... so attention will be confined to cases of love which involve sexuality ... sexual feelings, desires, acts and so on. Thus the stipulation excludes from ... consideration cases of fraternal love, paternal love and other cases not involving sexuality" (Montefiore, 1973, p. 116) He later says that sexuality can serve as a criterial mark for distinguishing the sorts of paradigm cases he mentioned earlier.

Even with his later refinements of this criteria, I think he has made an error, has eliminated too many of the kinds of relationships he has wanted to discuss, and has injected sex into the analysis of relationships far too early and made it far more important than it needs to be or is. Certainly I do not mean by romance all those or just those attractions which are sexual in nature. Some romantic feelings may include some sort of sexual desire, but not all do; and even of those that do, the desire may not be for intercourse but perhaps simply kissing, hugging, or holding hands.

For example, most "young love" or first love may involve wanting to be around the other person or to be with them, but may not involve necessarily wanting to be in physical embrace, and certainly does not always involve wanting to have intercourse or genital

stimulation. Such a thought may even be frightening or seem stupid or repulsive to many young people. And it was not long ago (if we are even past it yet) that many people thought that people they did not love were more properly the object of sexual advances than those they did, which if even a wrong, perverse, or perverted value, nevertheless helps show there is a difference between romantic attraction and sexual attraction.

Further, certainly one can have a sexual attraction for a person one cares little about romantically or in any other way. And the attraction can be a real one or just a fantasy one. By a fantasy one, I mean one that one knows is obviously better just to think about than actually to want to fulfill – one that is more fun to think about thinking about than to think about actually enacting. Sexual attractions or fantasies could be about almost anyone – a movie star, a teacher, a person seen walking down the street. They do not have to be about someone you know personally or someone with whom you would like to become romantically involved. Sexual attraction and/or lust are not always indications of love.

And, conversely, there are numerous relationships that seem to me fully romantic loving ones where two people perhaps like to cuddle closely without any need or desire to have (further) sexual stimulation. In some cases that might even spoil things, or may just be a temporary desire that, once fulfilled, allows them to get back to the primary fulfillment of just holding each other and perhaps talking and cuddling. Cuddling in this case seems emotional in some way without seeming to be properly described or thought of as sexual. The desire is not even sexual. Some older people with lowered sexual drive, some young people with low sexual drive to begin with, some perhaps handicapped or impotent or even frigid people may certainly love others romantically and/or even want some close cuddling without in any way having sex as a primary desire or sexual play as a primary goal or pleasure.

Again, intellectual stimulation and attraction or artistic stimulation and attraction might be the primary attraction between

two people without sex being that important or even necessary. Yet such people might have full, romantic, loving relationships.

Finally, even in a loving relationship where sex is an important attraction, goal, or feeling, still there might be quite loving, romantic, tender, wonderful feelings and attractions other than sexual desires, or after the fullest of sexual experiences so that these feelings are themselves not feelings of sexual desire. After one has fulfilled all the physical or sexual urges one can possibly tolerate (assuming for most people there is some satiating limit, at least at a particular time), if one still wants to be close to the loved one and one still wants to touch, cuddle, talk, go to a movie, have dinner, go for a walk on the beach with, or write a poem to, the loved one, then the primary or paradigmatic feeling then is not one of sexual attraction.

I will say more about sex later. At this point, I only want it understood again that by romance or romantic feelings or romantic attraction, I am in no way necessarily implying or necessarily meaning sexual attractions, feelings, or desires. I am not ruling them out, of course; but I certainly do not think they are (always) a precondition for, or "criterial mark" of, love or romance, or even of infatuation.

Key Takeaways

- Seeing that **all** relationships involve (potential) emotional, satisfaction, and ethical aspects

Key Terms

- ***Love changing*** suggests that there are a number of ways to satisfy a person more – (1) doing more things that are satisfying, (2) doing the same (number of) things but in a more satisfying way, or (3) satisfying them in more areas of psychological significance or importance (meaningfulness) to them, (4) satisfying them more deeply in such areas, or (5) any combination of the above, without some equal or greater decrease in one or more of them.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What are 5 ways to satisfy a person more?
- ***Question***: Are sexual attraction and/or lust always indications of love?

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Chapter 9 Infatuation, Friendship, and Love

Chapter 9 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Compare and contrast the similarities and differences among infatuation, friendship, and love.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to understand more about the difference between love and infatuation.

Love and infatuation

Some would hold that the difference between love and ***infatuation*** is that love lasts but infatuation does not. This is incorrect, I think, for a number of reasons. First, if there were no other difference between love and infatuation, it would make it impossible to tell whether any given relationship was a love relationship or an infatuation relationship until sometime in the future when people could look back and say whether the relationship lasted or not. Hence, no one could ever accurately say something like "those newly-weds certainly love each other" no matter how wonderful or fulfilling their relationship at the time; it could only be said on their 25th or 50th anniversary that "well, no one knew at the time, but those two certainly were in love when they married." And if either or both died young, no one could tell whether they were in love or just infatuated or not – or by unamended definition, since the state did not last, though involuntarily, it was not love. But none of this really is in keeping with common usage. We do make distinctions between love

relationships and infatuation relationships that are new or that exist now without feeling the need to wait for the passage of (more) time.

It seems to me that the best way to look at the difference between love and infatuation is that infatuation is simply the attraction aspect of love without significant or much, if any, satisfaction aspect and/or goodness aspect. The attraction is generally romantic attraction, also perhaps sexual, and/or physical, and/or emotional, and/or intellectual. Infatuation is the feeling of love without necessarily (much of) the beneficial value or satisfactions of love. It is the attraction to another person accompanied by too little else. Probably in many cases, infatuation does not last simply because the relationship offers little good or satisfaction (and sometimes does offer distinct harm and dissatisfaction) along with the attraction, and so the attraction dies. But there are many cases where attraction or infatuation endures in spite of unreasonable hardships and dissatisfactions in the relationship. This endurance does not make the feelings ones of love, just ones of enduring infatuation.

The word infatuation generally is used to describe relationships that are new, and often it is applied to younger couples rather than older, though if an older man takes a fancy to, or is attracted to, a younger girl, he may be said to be infatuated. But I think the term, or at least my description of it, could be equally well applied to longer term relationships and those between mature, reasonable people. In the movie *The Way We Were*, the characters portrayed by Streisand and Redford had genuine feelings of attraction for each other throughout the course of their long, tempestuous relationship, which included various separations and reconciliations. The separations were caused because the two simply were neither good enough nor satisfying enough for each other to be able to live, or even be, together for very long at a stretch. Both were good people but they had conflicting political, social, and moral views and conflicting career goals that they were not able to ignore, compromise, or work around sufficiently to be able to keep from hurting each others' feelings.

Yet none of that put an end to the feelings and the attraction they had for each other.

Sometimes lack of satisfaction and/or lack of goodness in a relationship will kill the feeling aspect too, but often it does not. Quite often, feelings are simply independent of other qualities or aspects in the relationship. The sad part of the movie *The Way We Were* was, it seems to me, that we often believe that any feelings, such as theirs, that can last so long and be so strong between two good people, should enable them to also be able to live together and to enjoy and satisfy and be good for each other. But this is simply often not so, and the relationship in that movie was just one instance of it. It would not have been nearly so sad or so tragic, I think, if they had simply realized that no amount of romantic (or any sort of) attraction(s) is sufficient by itself for a relationship to be also enjoyable and satisfactory or good. Even with regard to something as strong and as potentially satisfying as sexual attraction (assuming, what is not always true, that a partner you strongly desire sexually will be satisfactory actually to be with sexually), as Zsa Zsa Gabor once remarked on television, there must be something else in the relationship because you cannot be having sex every waking moment you are together.

It is the relying solely on feeling or attraction that causes so much grief so often. Feelings can be an impetus but cannot, without luck, be a guide, and certainly not necessarily a good guide to a good and satisfactory relationship. Youth, or at least the naive, are those who often meet obstacles because they follow feelings alone so often.

"If thou remember'st not the slightest folly That ever love did make thee run into, Thou has not loved." (Shakespeare, As You Like It 2. 4. 34-36)

I would think "love" in these lines is best understood in the sense of attraction or infatuation. I remember one time one of the boys I used to caddy with was so smitten by a girl we all saw walk by carrying her own golf clubs that he immediately left us to run to her to beg to carry her clubs for her. She said she could manage all

right on her own, but he insisted, and took them from her shoulder – only in his excitement and nervousness (we were all watching this episode, which added to his difficulties) he accidentally turned the bag upside down while looking at her and dumped her clubs out onto the ground. Our taunting laughter was deafening.

Sometimes, of course, as in undesirable pregnancy or undesirable marriage, an error of the heart can be far more serious or devastating than a youthful folly or embarrassment. Plautus' "He who falls in love meets a worse fate than he who leaps from a rock" need not be true, but so often is when passions cloud reason or are considered alone as a proper guide to action in pursuing a relationship.

Had Streisand's and Redford's characters recognized their relationship as one only or basically of infatuation or, if that sounds like too frivolous a description for mature people, enduring strong attraction, they may not have so futilely kept trying to have a fuller relationship that could not be and that made them so disheartened each time they realized they had to part. Had they simply accepted the attraction for what it was, and enjoyed what they rightfully could from it without demanding more – such as expecting their strong feelings alone to let them be able to live happily (and beneficially) ever after – it would hardly have seemed or been a tragic situation at all. If they could have recognized what they had and been happy for that instead of being sad for what they did not have, they would have been better off. Of course, mutual infatuation or attraction is not always easy to find, nor is love, so one sometimes unfortunately and unrealistically hopes that any attraction they do find is part of love instead of just infatuation; but neither is so impossible to find that infatuation cannot provide its particular benefit and delight without thereby just being a sad reminder of what is missing from a fuller relationship. Infatuation, being only part of love – the attraction part, certainly offers less than love, but it provides more than no relationship or feelings at all. It is exciting and it stirs the soul and the blood; it takes one outside of one's self and can make one feel "alive" and invigorated, renewed and young.

Infatuation or attraction is quite a nice thing in itself, as long as it is not expected or required to be more and as long as one does not expect it to carry aspects of a relationship that it cannot or should not. Neither love nor infatuation are so difficult to find that the discovery of either at any given time should seem such a miracle that all action is predicated on the belief it will never happen again and so one had better make the most of this singular (or latest) occurrence. The most may be too much.

People who expect feelings alone to solve or prevent all problems are just expecting far too much from feelings. This is not just in regard to relationships but in all kinds of areas, such as spending more money than one earns with the feeling everything will turn out all right anyway, gambling on a "hunch" more money than one can afford to lose, behaving irresponsibly in front of others, etc. Those who think of love as just a feeling or attraction may do so, ignoring my definition, but they should not then expect love as they think of it to be or to cause very good, full relationships. Feelings alone just cannot do that. At least they often do not do it.

In thinking of marriage or living together, it is important to consider, not just feelings, but present, and probable future, satisfactions and good things in the relationship, since living together on a day-to-day basis tends to highlight (in ways just dating does not) bad habits, bad manners, bad moods, and boredom. Few, if any, can be exciting, new, and wonderful all the time. More than just strong feelings are usually needed to keep a relationship running smoothly. One of my friends one time said he did not see why people who were in love "just wanted to live together" since it was the living together on a daily basis that was the toughest part of a relationship or marriage. Living apart, even though seeing each other most or much of the time, at least allows for some privacy, along with preparation for, and recuperation from, time together. And that concerns just the social aspect of marriage or living together. There are other aspects as well which I will discuss later.

And there is a tendency not only to put too much emphasis on feelings but also perhaps to believe that only the young legitimately have such feelings or have them often or deeply – that older people somehow know better (or, depending on your point of view, are not so lucky) unless one is like a "dirty old man" or some fellow in his "second childhood" or off his rocker who becomes "infatuated" with a young girl. In a sense, these two beliefs go hand in hand, for people who expect feelings to be the main factor or bond in relationships, if they try to remain monogamous, must suppress or ignore or try not to have strong or loving or romantic feelings for other people. One can get good at that with practice, and therefore, many older people do not get feelings of attraction they might otherwise. Further, if one has had some relationships that did not work out very satisfactorily, even though there were strong feelings of attraction involved, and if one still thinks attraction should be enough for relationships to work out satisfactorily, then it would be easy to see that, having been burned once or more, one might find it harder to have feelings of attraction for others. But my answer in both cases would be not to give up having feelings of attraction, but to give up expecting so much from them and to give up behaving solely upon one's feelings if and when they do occur. Feelings are, and should be, an important influence to action but not the sole guide. To expand on a comment by Antoine Bret, the first sign of passion need not be the last of wisdom; and the birth of wisdom need not signal the death of passion.

I think it is not that difficult for most of us to become very attracted, romantically or in other ways, to other people; but we need not expect a relationship to ensue or flourish just because of those feelings. One can relish the feelings without telling anyone, even the person who is the focus of the feelings. [Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*: "*Wenn ich dich lieb habe, was geht's dich an.*" ("If I love you, what business is it of yours.") (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 469).] Or one might tell that person they are attracted to them (intellectually, sexually, romantically, however) or smitten by them without thereby

seeking or needing to become lovers or have a fuller relationship in case that is not feasible for some reason or other. The other person might be very pleased just to know you care about them – as long as neither of you behave unreasonably or have unreasonable expectations or demands just because of the attraction. (One or both may be married or there may be aspects of the relationship, other than feelings, that might make it not such a good one.) There is no tragedy in liking someone very much whom you may rarely see or whom you simply worship from afar or to whom you try to be good in whatever small ways you can. In fact, that can be a very moving and heartwarming feeling. It is simply nice to have caring feelings about someone else, even if they are not returned or if nothing "further" can be involved in the relationship. The trouble only begins if one suspends one's life or lets it be ruined because one wants to act inappropriately on those feelings and/or have them returned in order to be appreciated.

In the July 1974 *Ms.* magazine, Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, in her article "Is Romance Dead?" (her answer is it is not, or at least it does not have to be) describes quite poignantly her "emotional backlash" against romance (either sense fits – exciting or general) after experiencing the crashing, stultifying blows when falling from the heights of romances that did not end well. She and other women like her were the "pallbearers"; romance was dead. Or, echoing Philip James Bailey in *Festus*:

"I cannot love as I have loved, And I know not why.

It is the one great woe of life

To feel all feeling die." (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 464)

Her article vividly deals with the problem (or evil) of a woman's giving up her own identity because of her romantic feelings for a man through whom she may live vicariously. "I know a woman, an artist who married an artist (and immediately put her paintbrushes away and became her husband's model – so much for self-fulfillment), who daydreamed, when her marriage went flat, about how wonderful it would be to be married to a photographer- writer she knew; in her fantasy, the sum of her joy was always to be at some

airport, waiting for him to return from a glamorous, exciting trip; she basked in his reflected glory."

Harrison then goes to point out that romance need not suffer for some women simply because in the past these women have mistakenly let it consume their identities to work ill on both themselves and their relationships. Correct; but this is just one area in which people tend to give their all to the feelings in the belief that the feelings will also give rise to joys and goodness. Feelings just don't always do that. And one need not just look at the Harrison kind of case, that of abandonment of the woman's self-identity and self-fulfillment. One can look at the Streisand- Redford case, where they each did or tried to fulfill their own goals in life, but that course too caused conflict and wreaked havoc in the relationship. And you can look at relationships in which one or both parties are selfish, with perceived different self-interests, and so things cannot work out. And this can be serious even over such mundane problems or disagreements as which television programs to watch or how to spend an evening or a few dollars. Or it can be over one's being an early riser who wants conversational company with the other who is – a slow, late, or meditating riser, who likes their first words in the morning to be "goodbye, dear, see you later." We do not have to have personally shattering problems, such as loss of identity, in order to get into severe problems in a relationship. That is why having sensitivity and a knowledge of ethics and understanding of fairness, as well as some important shared joys and satisfactions along the way, are so important in working out a full, lasting, and loving relationship. Feelings of attraction or romance alone just won't do the job, at least not also without luck.

Yet, mistakenly letting romance suffer or making yourself unreceptive to romantic feelings as you grow older and more experienced is to throw out the baby with the bathwater. It is not the having of romantic feelings that causes trouble in relationships, but the lack of other necessary ingredients with them – lack of areas of satisfaction and goodness, and/or lack of ability to resolve

conflicts that cause or reflect areas of dissatisfaction or harm. The solution to having romantic feelings that result in bad relationships is not to kill romance but to cultivate goodness and satisfaction in relationships that are romantic, and to recognize, and respond or behave appropriately in those romantic relationships that cannot be good enough or joyful enough to pursue beyond a certain, non-harming involvement.

I agree with Harrison's conclusions that romance is not dead. I also think that for people who like people, who are open to them, and who are open to their own feelings, romance or some sorts of attraction are not very difficult to experience. The problems arise when we make moral or behavioral errors about how to act toward others when we have some feelings toward them. And problems arise when we develop irrational and harmful expectations about how others should feel or behave toward us because of our feelings toward them. Just as it would be absurd to hit people just because you might not like them, so it is equally absurd to sleep with someone or to marry someone or to try to seduce someone just on the basis of your having some feeling of attraction toward them, without considering any other (satisfaction or ethical) aspect of the relationship. We should learn to understand our feelings and to put them into perspective or into context in a relationship so that we can make more enlightened decisions about what they, and other aspects of the relationship, dictate or recommend as proper actions. Even in cases where feelings are necessary requirements for an action (such as attraction or passion might be for good sex), they seldom are sufficient reasons for it.

So I think it is proper, and not altogether far from normal usage, to think of infatuation as a relationship involving feelings of loving attraction without very much satisfaction or goodness existing or likely to continue to exist. Where I depart perhaps from normal usages is in my belief that this can happen at any age and designate a relationship that has endured – perhaps one that in common usage would be described as strong and lasting bonds of affection rather than as infatuation. Nevertheless, what keeps the relationship from

being a full, loving one is that there are important other ingredients (satisfactions and goods) missing.

If one thinks of a relationship's further pursuit and enlargement as being justified not only by the feelings involved but also by the amount of good and joy or satisfaction that it brings to the people involved, then one might call love, not just attraction or infatuation, but "justified attraction" or "justified infatuation". Attraction alone would be just infatuation; to be love, there must be attraction along with goodness and satisfaction for (and from) each other; love is justified infatuation.

Who Receives the Enjoyment and Benefit

I have said that for A to love B, it must be B that satisfies A and is good for A, rather than A that satisfies B or is good for B. In short, the loved one must be good for the loving one, rather than, as most people seem to think of it, the other way around (though, of course, in a mutually loving relationship both, on my definition, will be good for each other). Part of the reason for that is that it seems to me we would want to say A is infatuated with B (rather than in love with B) if A were the one with strong feelings who was also doing all the good things for B and not deriving much good from B. The lament that "you can't be in love with him (her) because he (she) isn't any good for you," seems to me to have a point beyond just that you cannot or should not have strong feelings of attraction toward him (her), because of the way he (she) treats you. Obviously people do sometimes have strong feelings for those they should not – that is, even when having such feelings is unreasonable. We justifiably say then such feelings are not a sign of love but of folly, loneliness, self-deception, senility in second childhood, or hormonal imbalance. We may say A is not in love but in lust or in heat. We would reasonably say such feelings are blind or crazy or only infatuation, not love – whether they last or not. Some people are inexplicably attracted for a long time to someone who is bad for (and often, to) them.

Take the soppy-dependent housewife case – where she is attracted to her husband, does good for him in some ways at least,

and gets satisfaction out of it. I don't want to say that she loves him, though we might want to say she is certainly crazy for him, or self-sacrificing for him, or addicted to him, or dependent upon him. I want to say her attraction is not one of love, but one of naive sacrifice or dependence. It is like that of naive young people who are romantically attracted to the first person who shows any interest in them at all and who then think that they are in love and who think the other person is good for them, regardless of how good or ill the other person actually is for them. Regardless of intentions, this is not love, however romantic it might be; it is only infatuation or loving *feelings*, perhaps accompanied by some amount of joy or satisfaction, particularly at having those feelings, but accompanied by no, little, or insufficient goodness. Love is beneficial for a lover, not sacrificial – at least not continuously, unnecessarily, wastefully, and wrongfully sacrificial. Sacrifice is sometimes necessary in a (love) relationship, but not this kind of sacrifice. Needless, pointless sacrifice is not love.

It seems to me that if someone to whom you are attracted makes you very happy, but you recognize they are not otherwise very good for you – no matter how attracted to you they are, how happy you make them, and how good you are for them – it would be foolish for you to say you love them. It would be better to say you really care for them and about their well- being, and that they make you happy in many ways, but that you cannot say you love them, since you do not feel the relationship is good for you – even though they love you, and even though they may try or want to do what is right for you.

Love's growing (or diminishing)

Though I wrote earlier that love could increase through an increase in attraction, goodness, and/or joy in the relationship (without some equal or greater decrease in one or two of the other areas), there is a difference between when the increase is in attraction and when it is in goodness and/or joy.

First, though an increase in any area may accompany or even cause an increase in another (that is, more joy or goodness may

cause greater attraction or vice versa), it need not. So what I mean by love's growing through an increase in goodness or satisfaction for one or both in the relationship is not necessarily that there is an increase in feelings of attraction, but that the existing feelings of attraction are more worthy of being called loving ones – the feelings are more ones of love than of just infatuation.

I point this out because it is easy to understand how love increases when the feelings of attraction for the partner increase; but it is not so easy to see how love has increased when the feelings perhaps remain the same and just the other dimensions improve or increase. In such a case, the relationship has improved and (both by my definition and, I think, by intuition or common usage) is a more loving one, though the feelings of attraction are not by themselves more loving. I would think it entirely reasonable in ordinary usage, as well as by my definition, for a woman, who has matured from being a soppy-dependent housewife into being a wife who has a more equal and more equitably beneficial relationship with her husband, to be described as more in love and less infatuated and dependent than she was before, even if the amount and kind of attraction she feels for her husband may not have changed substantially.

Love and friendship

The other side of the coin then is a relationship in which there are joys and goods to some (even large) extent, but little if any feelings of attraction (other than perhaps just "liking"), particularly, little, if any, romantic or loving feelings. This seems to me to characterize friendship. (Or if friendship has a feeling of attraction, it is simply a different feeling from feelings of love or romance. How it feels to be a friend is different from how it feels to love – regardless of how much else in terms of enjoyment and benefit is similar in the relationship.)

Many of us know people with whom we get along perfectly well, with whom we perhaps enjoy being or doing some or many things, people we respect and like, and people about whose well- being

we care, but people for whom we feel no particular (romantic) attraction. There may be no particular reason for the attraction's being missing; it just simply is not there. Or maybe the other person reminds us of a sister or brother for whom the thought of romantic attraction is unthinkable. People who have no homosexual interests find no romantic or sexual attraction for others of their gender no matter how satisfactory or enjoyable or good the relationship is; hence, they will simply be friends with whomever they share such good relationships.

This in no way belittles friendship. To find another who is good for you and a joy to you (and for whom you reciprocate these qualities) is no small achievement in this world, and no small treasure. And since one has little control over what or whom one finds attracting, there is no reason to feel shame at not finding another alluring nor to feel hurt at not being found alluring to another. Romantic feelings are often very capricious and very elusive. They often come where there is no other good in the relationship (hence, infatuation) and they just as often do not arise where there is some (even great) value (hence, friendship).

Now some adolescent, immature, or insecure people might often acquire romantic feelings for someone just because that person has been friendly or good to them, even in just a somewhat superficial or normally polite way; but many times people simply accept these good things as friendship or as normally polite behavior without thereby feeling attraction or feeling the need for there to be attraction. I said earlier that attraction can be independent of the amount of joy or other good in a relationship; and I think friendship is one case in which it is, a case in which attraction does not exist though joys or other goods do.

I have a friend who once wrote me a troubled letter about no longer being able to find the magic in relationships. She wondered whether she should "settle" for a fellow that she was dating whom she liked and with whom she got along well. He loved her. But she did not feel the "magic". Yet her previous marriage to a fellow she

had felt the enthralling magic of enchantment with, and for whom she still felt some magic, had not been good for her at all; and her ex-husband still caused her grief when he was around, even though she still cared, in the way of feelings, for him. Perhaps magic was not the answer. Yet she hated to think love had to be dispassionate and just logical and simply nice.

I wrote to her that, of course, one often got into difficulty by letting only one's feelings be his or her guide. (The song "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" said it well enough:

"They asked me how I knew my true love was true.

I simply replied something here inside cannot be denied.

Now laughing friends deride tears I cannot hide." (Harbach, 1933)

But that did not mean one should then repress or ignore all feelings, nor that one should not expect them to be in some relationships. Love without the "magic" for her[1] is not love but friendship. And friendship, no matter how rare nor how valuable it is, is simply not the same thing as love. If she was looking for love and magic, then she should keep on looking. I advised she not settle for anything, since from knowing her it seemed she would be unhappy if she did, but I told her that magic alone was not enough, as she should well know from past experience, and that perhaps in time it would even arise in this relationship she had written about that was otherwise so good. After all, romantic passion sometimes does occur even in the best of relationships.

Further, I suggested she not worry too much about not being able to seem to find romance so easily any more, since after all, now that she was older and wiser, and had been so badly burned one time, she did not simply any longer fall head over heels for the first good looking body attached to a smile that said hello in her direction, as she may once have. Youth may more easily find romance, may more easily find the magic, but that is often only because youth is often so much less discriminating. It is so much less difficult to find romance than it is to find romance with the right person in a good and satisfying relationship. And the latter is what one seeks as one gets older, or after one has had bad experiences. That is what she

sought now; that is more difficult to find. She should not despair then that magic was less available than when she was younger, more naive, and more easily impressed.

A Little Bit of Love – Combining Some Infatuation and Some Friendship

Sometimes one will have attraction for a friend or get along well with (enjoy and benefit from) someone one is attracted to, yet one will feel like they are not "in love" or will feel that something is missing. I think what is occurring in these cases is that though there are some attraction(s), some benefit(s), and some satisfaction(s), there are not enough or enough of the right (or important or desired) kinds for one to want to marry or live with the other one, devote a lot of time and energy to the relationship, and/or pursue the other person monogamously, excluding pursuing other potential, and potentially more fulfilling, relationships.

In some cases, the balance in these relationships is weighted more on the side of the friendship aspects (enjoyment and goods) then on the infatuation or attraction part, in which case one seems to feel some attraction, affection, or desire for a friend. In some cases, the balance may be more weighted toward the attraction, in which case one feels somewhat more than just infatuation. In some cases, the balance may be fairly equal, and both aspects – friendship and infatuation – combining attraction, joy, and benefit may even be fairly strong. In all such cases, then, by my definition, there is a little bit or even a considerable bit of love, just not enough to make one want to commit to, or desire, an exclusive or more fully involved or more fully active relationship.

Just as there can be degrees of attraction, enjoyment, and satisfaction, there can be degrees of love; and there can be love that is weighted more strongly toward one or two of the three aspects instead of being equally divided among all three. In some cases, one might even be able to more or less measure the degree and/or kind of commitment, involvement, exclusivity, time and energy one wants to devote to the other person.

[1]I need to emphasize this "for her", since many people have loving feelings or feelings of attraction without feeling (or needing to feel) excitement or a "tingle" or the "magic". They can have romance in the general sense without requiring it in the sense of aroused, exciting, passion. (Return to text.)

Key Takeaways

- Love involves attraction (particularly 'romantic' attraction in romantic love, as distinguished from brotherly, sisterly, maternal, paternal, friendly feelings or love) but it also involves more.
- The difference between infatuation and love is not about their duration but about whether there is more valuable substance to the relationship than just the attraction.

Key Terms

- ***Infatuation*** is a romantic attraction without sufficient goodness or satisfaction in the relationship to qualify as being love.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What is a significance for the analysis of love in this book of Antoine Bret's statement: "The first sign of passion need not be the last of wisdom; and the birth of wisdom need not signal the death of passion"?
- ***Question***: What are some typical causes of trouble in relationships that have merely attraction for each other?

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Chapter 10 Love at First Sight

Chapter 10 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Recognize that 'love at first sight' is generally best considered to be 'attraction' at first sight, and may not have the other elements necessary for that attraction to be considered love, because not enough is known about whether the person will satisfy or be good for you.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn the science behind love at first site.

> "Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight?"
> Christopher Marlowe (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 473)

There can definitely be attraction such as sexual, romantic, or physical at first sight, even "across a crowded room". There can be an intellectual attraction at perhaps first hearing or first reading. There can be an emotional attraction developing rapidly in a relationship. And even, before actually meeting someone, you might be attracted to them out of compassion because you see them being browbeaten by another, or out of appreciation because they are treating children in some very tender, beautiful way. In short, the feeling, or a feeling, component of love may arise very quickly in a relationship, or even before the parties have actually met each other if one has observed something about the other.

However, the satisfaction aspects and ethical dimensions (apart

from whatever good or enjoyment there is in the good feelings of being attracted to, or passionate about, another or upon, say, seeing them behave well toward others) are still primarily potential rather than actual early in a relationship. Someone you are just meeting cannot yet have been very satisfactory or very good for you, though there may be a great deal of potential for them to be; and for you to be for them. Some couples and some circumstances under which they come together, may start to realize that potential faster than others, but even in the most ideal conditions, "first sight" will be too soon or too brief to bring about or realize very much of that potential.

Love at first sight then seems perhaps better considered to be attraction at first sight. And the attraction may be that of love – the same attraction may remain as the relationship develops and bestows its unfolding benefits and blessings – but that cannot be known right away. For the relationship might not hold or develop sufficient joy to warrant being called love; and the attraction, whether it lingers or fades, will only then have been infatuation at first sight.

Of course, not all attractions, whether of love or otherwise, are at first sight, but any can be. As time passes and the relationship has time to progress, one might become more satisfied and better off because of the relationship. But this could only begin in some limited aspects immediately in the kinds of cases frequently occurring in movies where the couple meets by one person's rescuing the other from some dangerous situation. Unless one saves another from a boring conversation, such opportunities rarely present themselves at such things as parties.

Of course, if one is lonely and in need of tenderness and understanding, finding a tender, understanding person at a party may be very good and very satisfying, but it still is a somewhat limited, though certainly important (at that time especially) part of a relationship.

Key Takeaways

- Reinforcement of the idea that attraction or 'chemistry' is not the only criteria or element of romantic love and that, as pointed out previously, love can be considered to be 'justified infatuation' or, in this case, justified attraction at first sight.

Key Terms

- ***Love at first sight*** may be defined as attraction at first sight. The attraction may be that of love – the same attraction may remain as the relationship develops and bestows its unfolding benefits and blessings – but that cannot be known right away. For the relationship might not hold or develop sufficient joy to warrant being called love; and the attraction, whether it lingers or fades, will only then have been infatuation at first sight.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: Why is love at first sight better

considered to be just attraction at first sight?

- ***Question***: Can love at "first sight" be confirmed earlier in some relationships than others? If so, how or why?

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Chapter 11 Importance of Various (Kinds of) Satisfactions

Chapter 11 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain at least three difference senses of what it means for something to be important in or for a relationship.

Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn some skills for healthy romantic relationships.

The question may arise as to whether certain (types of) satisfactions may be more important than others. For example, is it more important to have a good sexual relationship or to have a good intellectual relationship?

This question has three different senses. It asks (sense 1), are there some (kinds of) satisfactions that are (ethically) better than others for the people involved, or (sense 2) are there some (kinds of) satisfactions that make a relationship more enjoyable or happier than other (kinds of) satisfactions. It also asks (sense 3) whether there are some (kinds of) satisfactions that make the relationship more likely to continue in the same manner it is now, fade and perhaps be less loving, or grow better and perhaps be more loving; whether there are some that might make it more likely to fail or grow stronger, more likely to end or endure.

I will leave the answer to sense 3 for sociologists to determine,

for they, if anyone, would be the ones to discover in some sort of scientific fact-finding manner what sorts of joys (and/or dissatisfactions) in what sorts of relationships between what sorts of people correlate with what sort of changes that take place in those relationships. That is, if there are any such correlations. It is primarily (but not totally) an empirical matter to determine which personal traits and relationship characteristics, if any, correlate with long time satisfaction in relationships.

With regard to sense 1, I will point out in the chapter on ethics what some of the things are which I think are necessary or important for the good life. Anything in a relationship that helps people attain these things will then be what I consider more important in this sense.

In this chapter, I wish to discuss sense 2, the question of which joys, if any, might be more enjoyable or more essential for happiness than others.

First, some cases:

When you are driving alone at night on a superhighway, it can be a very lonely experience, with cars zooming by you or you zooming by other cars without you or their occupants acknowledging each other. Some people do not even bother to put on turn signals when they change lanes to pass you and then cut back in. But quite often, after a time of this, someone you may not even be able to see very well, if at all, might drive along with you, signal appropriately, slow down or speed up just enough to be sure you and they can continue driving together. Of course, with CB radios there may be further communication, but I am talking of even the simplest case without such verbal contact. Such a meeting on a long drive can be a very heartwarming thing, and when one of you finally exits the highway, you might wave or flash lights at each other to say goodbye, never to knowingly cross paths again. On a short drive or on a busy freeway with most drivers driving courteously and well, one would probably not even notice some other particular driver that drove courteously even in a prolonged proximity.

When you are hungry, you feel like eating, and certain foods may be quite satisfying. When you are not hungry, neither food nor the thought of food may be very satisfying. When you are nauseated, it may be downright unpleasant.

Sex or the thought of sex may be very pleasant at some times and not pleasant at all at other times. Sex and food are not too different in this regard; when you are fully satisfied by either, the thought of more of it is not always pleasurable. Likewise, when you are distinctly not in the mood or the right condition, the idea of either might be quite unpleasant. Once at the beginning of one of those 48 hour stomach flu bouts, I just barely was able to drive back 200 miles from a weekend with my parents to my college apartment that I shared with three other fellows. I was suffering from all sorts of chills and nausea. I felt like I wanted to throw up but I seemed unable to, and I was not about to force it. I knew I needed some aspirin, but the thought of trying to swallow and retain aspirin was itself sickening. I wanted to sleep but was too chilled and too sick to my stomach. My roommates were having a party that night, which luckily I was able to completely ignore. I went to bed, in heavy pajamas and a robe, and under twelve thousand blankets. Still I lay there freezing and shivering. One of my roommates came in to see how I was. After I told him, he jokingly (I hope) said, "What you need in there is a nice, warm girl. Let me just go out to the party and see if I can find you one; then I'll just bring her back to snuggle up in there with you." Well, the very thought of such a thing made me so sick that I was able to lose my supper and my nausea in the bathroom simultaneously and immediately. I then took my two aspirins, finally started to warm up, went to sleep, alone, and felt not too terrible the next day. At least I no longer felt both about to die and afraid I might not. Sex and sickness don't always mix. (A get well card I saw once said, "People sick in the hospital normally don't keep trying to seduce their nurses – so either you are not sick or you are not normal.")

In the *Iliad* of Homer, the protagonist Achilles quite clearly has the

choice to fight in battle, be a hero, lead his troops to victory, and die in the process, or to quit the battlefield and go back to his homeland and be like a tender of sheep or woman at home while the "real" men of Greece fight, earn glory, and, in some cases, die at Troy. He makes the agonizing choice to fight though it will mean his death. Yet in the *Odyssey* when Odysseus talks to Achilles in the underworld, Achilles hates it there so much that he says he would rather be a manservant to the lowliest of men than to remain where he is.

Yet one gets the feeling that Achilles, if granted that option, would after a while no more wish to remain such a manservant than he had wished to come home and tend sheep in obscurity. The point of all this is the often forgotten, though hardly difficult, notion that under different conditions and circumstances, what people want, or find important (in sense 2) to make them happy or satisfied often varies with different circumstances, and/or with different moods.

Someone turning on their turn signal lights to signal a lane change may be hardly noticed most of the time; yet after long stretches on a lonely dark drive when no one else has courteously signaled, someone's doing so may be very gratifying. Sex or food when you are in the mood might be super, otherwise sickening or simply not palatable.

In relationships, it is often the same way. What might be satisfying, desired, important, or very pleasant at one time or at one period in your life, may not be at another. To a teenager (or any insecure person) who feels unloved and inadequate, someone who simply likes them and perhaps likes to go out or make out with them might seem the most satisfying and important of people. But at some later stage in one's life, where other problems or cares arise, that may not be very satisfying or important behavior at all. After a bad day at the office that makes you hostile and aggressive, an evening of knocking hell out of a tennis ball may be the perfect thing, whereas on another night, going out to a quiet restaurant with nice quiet conversation may be the perfect evening for a quietly gratifying day.

Where I once worked as a photographer, one of the people in the

business office became passionately interested all of a sudden in doing photography. He bought a camera and electronic flash and some various lenses, after reading all the photography magazines he could get hold of. He was shooting all kinds of color and black and white film to see what he liked best, constantly posing his wife and kids and in-laws, analyzing the results, reading more magazines, talking to me about his results, problems, etc. In short, he found photography very interesting, satisfying, and important to him. For birthday and holiday presents his wife and family started giving him photographic equipment – lenses and other various accessories; and he was more than delighted with each one. Yet two months earlier, her giving him something like a tripod would have been a joke. He had no interest in photography whatsoever then. Photography, once not important to him, had suddenly become very important to him.

Just the other day I chided a friend (who is soon going to be divorced for the second time) for swearing that she is sure she will never ever want to marry again. I laughed at her and told her that she was old enough and wise enough to know that was probably an idle vow and that since she was an intelligent, beautiful, and caring person, undoubtedly she would someday in the not too distant future fall in love again and, being "certain" she was not making the same kind of mistakes she had in the past, she would want to be married, after she has been single long enough to learn to hate it as much as she now hates a marriage that has become untenable.

Some people go through their whole lives without their interests changing much; and what might be important and satisfying to them at age 16, like getting a new car, might also be their biggest thrill at age 56. Others, however, do change. And what might be satisfying or important at sixteen might seem unimportant or trivial at fifty. While my friend at the office is suddenly going berserk about photography, another acquaintance I know gave it up shortly after the birth of their second child, some twenty years ago. He had

done lots of photography before getting married, then also took lots of pictures of his first child when she was very little.

But finally he simply tired of it and moved into other areas of interest. One of the more hotly disputed disagreements I had with my college German teacher (for whom I had the most passionate crush) concerned a point she made relating to a play we had just finished studying. She claimed that it was more important to love than to be loved. I saw that it was important to love, but since I had spent all of high school in love with a girl to whom I was only a friend and since I found my freshman year at college a very lonely experience, loving someone else did not seem half as important as being loved. ***Unrequited love*** was not something I highly recommended to anyone. Just one year later I was disputing something with a roommate when I found myself concluding in the vehement argument that it was more important to love than to be loved. Suddenly I stopped talking, realizing I was now arguing against my own position of a year earlier and taking my former teacher's side (my teacher had concluded our discussion by teasing that if I were not so young I would see her point; and I had not been smart enough to tease back that if she were not so old she would see mine; and now here I was a year older and she was right. Damn!). Had it not been 1:30 a.m. on a Sunday at the time, I think would have telephoned my former teacher at home to tell her she had been right after all.

However, by the next morning, I came to my senses before seeing her and realized that we had both been right or half-right. At some times and for some people, it is more important to love, and at other times it is more important to be loved. For example, when you are demonstrably loved by someone whose affection you cannot honestly return and/or when you have gone a long time feeling no stirrings of passion and are starting to wonder if you are not jaded or partly dead, it might be more important to love than to be loved. When you are easily caring or loving toward others but feeling lonely or unloved in return, as I had been through high school or my freshman year at college, the opposite might be true. Sometimes

both are equally important, finding someone to love and to be loved by. My teacher thanked me for my insight and for not sharing it with her at 1:30 by phone that morning. She also seemed pleased that a class discussion had meant enough to me for me to remember it.

In *The Philanderer*, Shaw wrote "the fickleness of the women I love is only equaled by the infernal constancy of the women who love me" (Shaw, 1906)." If one loves or finds oneself attracted to others, but finds that feeling (love, attraction, or infatuation) unreturned, then being loved may be far more important than loving. But as in the kind of case mentioned in Harrison's "Is Romance Dead?" and in my friend's seeking the magic in a relationship, it sometimes happens that one needs to be able to find passion for another more than one needs to have another's passion directed toward oneself. Francoise Duc La Rochefoucald's maxim might appropriately describe such a time: "The pleasure of love is in loving. We are happier in the passion we feel than in what we excite" (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 471). Then there is Byron's: "He who loves, raves…but the cure is bitterer still" (cited in Roberts, 1940, p.466). Or to repeat, Bailey: I cannot love as I have loved, And yet I know not why; It is the one great woe of life, To feel all feeling die.

Certainly, the stirring of feelings toward another, feelings long thought dead and missed, can be a wonderful and important experience, whether love then is returned or not. I once wrote a woman to whom I was attracted for no good reason at all, and told her of my crush on her, making certain to say I neither expected nor really wanted it to come to anything but that I simply wanted her to know how exciting I found her and that it was a nice feeling for me to experience, particularly since "there were so few worthy objects of infatuation" around. I hope she took that in the right way and was pleased by it. I think it is nice to let someone know you feel affection for them if you can do it without making them feel you are making demands on them and if you do not embarrass them. Also, verbally expressing an infatuation can help prevent it from becoming an obsession. And though obsessions can themselves be bittersweet

when feelings have long been missing and missed, generally obsessions are not fun.

Unrequited love or even unrequited desire may be too frustrating to bear at times; but being loved by those who excite no passion in you may be a bore or an embarrassment. And so each might find its complement equally important. (Or equally unimportant… when other concerns are of more immediate interest and consequence than loving or being loved.)

In the ethics chapter, I will mention some things that I think are important (ethical) values to have and/or to pursue. But in the areas of interest or joy or satisfaction, there are many things that are perhaps of equal ethical value, though of different satisfaction or importance at different times or to different people. As long as one leads a morally good life, it makes little difference which particular good (as opposed to destructive or evil) interests one finds fun or satisfying. Sharpening one's physical skills at tennis or one's creative skills at photography may be equally good if both are fun recreation for different people. So may be just sitting around relaxing, or any of hundreds of other harmless things people do for fun.

Of any activities which are equally good, that which is most important (sense 2) or most satisfying is what is most important (sense 2) to some particular individual at that time and under those circumstances. It is pointless to ask what activities are, or should be, most important (sense 2) or most satisfying in general.

Hence, one may play the violin as a child, hate it, give it up, then later take it up again and find it terribly satisfying. One may find sexual satisfaction an important value at one time in one's life and not at another. One person may like sports better than intellectual activity; another, just the reverse. A third may like or dislike both equally. Even in sports, a person may find fencing more of a passion than swimming, hockey more exciting to watch than football, or running more fun to do than playing golf. Even more specifically, a golfer may love tournament golf and hate social golf. An intellect may love history but be bored by chemistry or psychology. Even

in a given field, such as math, someone may like one specialty far more than another. In medicine, a doctor may love endocrinology and hate pediatrics. I like certain kinds of philosophy but not others. I am much more interested in certain areas of ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of mind and philosophy of religion than I am in higher theoretical kinds of symbolic logic; with an interest somewhere in between for metaphysics, theories of knowledge, and philosophy of language. And, even in the subjects I have interest in, I have almost no interest in certain kinds of works by Kant, Spinoza, Hegel, and others that other philosophers might appreciate a great deal.

Some general interests may outlive specific interests, though not always. For example, someone's interest in sports in general may outlive their interest in playing basketball or even in spectating in basketball. Many men who grew up in basketball of a different era have lost interest in the kind of hectic, sometimes out of control, much faster paced basketball of today. Many of them have turned to other sports to watch or to play for enjoyment, still finding an excitement in seeing individuals or teams playing against each other in a contest of athletic skill where winning and losing and championships are important. Sometimes it works the other way around; a person with an interest in sports in general may grow weary of watching so many contests that have become to him a predictably tiresome, repetitive, indistinguishable blur and simply focus his athletic interests on playing tennis or golf for fun and watch matches and tournaments only in order to learn from them, not because he gets excited about competition.

Especially Significant or Meaningful Satisfactions

Now I think that even among areas that are personally important at a given time there are some areas for at least some people that are of very special importance or significance to them. These are what I refer to as particularly psychologically important or meaningful areas. These are areas of psychological importance as opposed to ethical importance because remember I am speaking here, as in this entire chapter, of areas of interest, in terms of their

personal satisfaction, not in terms of their overall ethical value, a subject that I will address later. I am assuming these are areas that are not ethically wrong for a person to enjoy but are worthwhile or simply ethically neutral areas in which to seek satisfaction. I am not talking about the pursuit of activities which are cruel or destructive or even self-limiting or self-victimizing, but of things which there is no reason for a given person not to find enjoyable. They do not necessarily have to be things which are of any great value outside of the interest and enjoyment they provide the person in question; they simply must not be things which are ethically wrong (for whatever reason) for her or him to pursue or enjoy.

It is easiest for me to speak here of my own most important or most meaningful areas. I have always been a fairly inquisitive person about how things work and about how people think and why they do the things they do. I like to understand people and to understand at least the basic principles, if not always the particular details, of physics and engineering. My interest in the thinking processes of people tends to be the greater of these, and often even my interest in scientific matters is not so much a question of how things work as it is why scientists think that is how things work – the theoretical basis for believing the scientific principles. I tend to get very excited about reasonable insights into people's minds concerning the reasons for their behavior, their ideas and views about the universe, and about things like ethics. And I tend to appreciate and often like people who discuss and share such insights, particularly if they do so especially ingeniously, cleverly, or knowledgeably, whether they are drawing on knowledge from psychology, literature, art, history, personal reflection, philosophy, or whatever. I even prefer doctors and dentists who will discuss the reasons for their diagnosis and treatment and who have insight into your feelings and concerns rather than those who only silently treat your body without much if any explanation about what they are doing and why. One series of interesting, though perhaps rather conjectural, lectures I once attended had to do with historical medical detective work, trying to relate certain aspects of behavior

and thought patterns of historically important figures to medical conditions they may have had, as diagnosed from unintentional clues about them in biographies, in their own writings, and in chronicles and histories about their era.

I even like sports better when coaches or announcers display expertise about, and put emphasis on, strategy and tactics more than on raw athletic talent such as speed, strength, agility, coordination, peripheral vision, and reflexes.

I like photography and art, but I like particularly those portraits or portrayals of people that give insight into their character and do not just show their features. I often get the chance to photograph beautiful women, but almost without exception, I enjoy that more (or only at all) when the woman I am photographing is intelligent or perceptive and intellectually interesting. Though photography most obviously is of a person's looks, still somehow one's character and one's mind, come through in some important way, if not in the photograph, at least in the photography session. And I have invariably found that photographing someone who is externally beautiful but immature, naive, or vacant is not nearly as exiting or as much fun as photographing someone even less objectively or obviously physically attractive who is interesting, witty, or perceptive. And I think the latter kind of person (almost) always comes out even more attractive looking in my photographs as well.

Even regarding sex, I personally find silent sex, regardless of how physically pleasurable it might be, a fairly empty experience compared to sex, even less physically pleasurable sex, that also includes witty, teasing, playful, and/or intense serious conversation that give insights into each others' minds and ideas. Touching each other is nice; but touching each other and talking with each other can be sublime.

I live a great deal in my head and I find that I can often get through many otherwise boring or painful experiences by simply concentrating on interesting things in a way that blocks out unwanted sensations. (I practice at the dentist's, for example, since I

am more afraid of Novocain and a dental error I cannot detect until after his office closes than of pain while he works. Unfortunately, this does not work as well at cocktail parties as it does at places where your thinking and your reveries can be uninterrupted.)

As I have grown older, finding people with perceptive insights and interesting intellectual knowledge they can explain in reasonable ways, has become increasingly important to me, particularly when I worked at jobs or was thrown unavoidably into company that seemed to frustrate or prevent any kind of thinking.

President Kennedy admired the scope and genius of Thomas Jefferson's intellect and once told an invited party of illustrious Nobel laureates that theirs was the greatest collection and concentration of intellect ever assembled in the White House with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone.

There have been many days after being around all the wrong kinds of people at work that many people have felt their level of intellectual companionship greatly increased when they got home from their jobs and closed the door to be alone or to be just with their spouse or even their younger children. I have often felt that way, and at those times in particular, finding intelligent companionship was far more important than finding any other kind of companionship.

I have not always felt this way, and I do not know how much longer I will feel this way, but for a very long time now I have primarily sought, and still primarily seek, companions with intelligent insights into the kinds of areas I find interesting, along with, or regardless of, any other satisfying characteristics they might have. These, to me, are the most enjoyable and exciting people to be with. And even previously when I was single, unattached, and lonely, if I became romantically or passionately attracted to someone who was not like this, I tended to shy away from any serious involvement with them since I knew it would not be a particularly enduringly enjoyable or fulfilling relationship for me.

Hence, with me, through most of my adult life, though sex and affection have always or often been important, and though I enjoy art, music, and a number of sports, the most meaningful and psychologically important area of life, and the area in which I have most sought and enjoyed companionship, is the area of intellectual kinship. Although I never needed for all my relationships to include this aspect (for example, I had some buddies I only played tennis with, but we had a great time and a lot of laughs on the tennis court and never tried to get together for anything else), if this area turned out to be missing in romantic relationships or in those other relationships that I wished to be more than just temporary or compartmentalized (like the tennis relationship), they were not as satisfying, full, or complete a relationship as I would like to have had them be. And although I became attracted to women who were not intellectual in this way, and have not always been attracted to women who were, it seems to be a quality that makes attraction more likely to develop in me for someone generally, and certainly one that makes romance and friendship more likely to be satisfying to me, gratifying to me, enduring, and successful. Regardless of what other important qualities or traits other people and relationships might have that I find satisfying, this one is (and has most enduringly been) the most important and the most necessary for my general happiness with the people and relationships.

That is why I have included in my characterization of love, pertaining to satisfactions, that if (and as long as) A has particularly personally important areas, whatever they might be, B must satisfy them to some extent and at least not disappoint, dissatisfy, or frustrate A in them. Whatever other areas, even whatever important areas, there may in which B makes A happy, if B does not satisfy A in these most important areas or, worse, if B frustrates or disappoints A in those areas, there is something crucial missing in the relationship for A, something that makes it less of a love relationship than it could be, and perhaps not fully a love relationship at all.

Deprivation

Sometimes something like good sex might be more important when you do not have it then when it is readily available. Some things are more psychologically important in a state of deprivation than in a state of fulfillment or easy access. Being deprived of something such as sex or food may be far more dissatisfying than having it is satisfying when it is easily available. Starving is much more of an ill or dissatisfaction than eating a normal meal or grabbing a sandwich, just because it is lunch time, is a good or satisfaction. One takes breathing for granted and does not consider it a particular satisfaction at all, but not being able to breathe fresh air is particularly dissatisfying and can make the first few gasps of fresh air very satisfying indeed after an almost asphyxiating experience.

And not just sex, but sex of a certain sort, may be more important at some times than at others. Sometimes, or to some people, romantic, loving sex is important. At other times, teasing or playful sex. Contrived sex, spontaneous sex, fast sex, or slow sex, or just sex itself of any sort may be more important at any time of deprivation of (that kind of) sex than when it is abundantly available. Or a gentle touch, nice personality, or someone whom you like liking your children and being kind to them, may assume monumental importance when not easily found or not readily available. Divorced women with children often particularly appreciate a date who likes their children, especially after going out with men who do not. People having a bad time or a bad relationship may overreact to and over-appreciate a person who supplies the needed missing aspects; though under normal circumstances such traits might not be quite so satisfying, stimulating, attracting, or even noticeable.

It is difficult to tell what may become so monumentally important under deprivation conditions. A simple hello may provoke the strongest affection or satisfaction in a lonely, depressed, or shy person. Finding an intelligent mind belonging to a person who is stimulated by ideas you have that so many others have ignored or belittled may be tremendously exhilarating. The deprivation of a normally unimportant satisfaction may trigger an obsession for its

satisfaction that makes it difficult, or even wrong, to deny. As a desire (one which is not ethically bad or immoral) grows, it demands fewer reasons other than itself for seeking its fulfillment, and it demands greater negative reasons for its denial; the more you want something which is not somehow wrong to have, the fewer other reasons you need to pursue it.

Hence, it is extremely important to be aware of how changing environment affects one's own, and others', scales of importance of desires. Anyone may all too readily seek or accept (though often only temporarily) what would under normal circumstances be unimportant or unacceptable. For example, one often sees a divorced person marry a person only because that person is nice to them whereas their former spouse was not (perceived to be) nice to them. In such a case, just being nice may not be enough at a slightly later time when it turns out there are other needs or desires that are not being met. Or a person might fall in love during a lonely and terrifying "final exam" week at college, only to find out when the loneliness and terror of such a time passes, that they have "fallen in love" with someone they would never have under normal circumstances, and whom they cannot love now. Loneliness or fear can make one seek comfort with someone whom one would not find so appealing if one were happier or more secure. It might, in some cases, be the emotional equivalent of seeing someone at closing time in a bar through 'beer goggles' when they seem much more appealing than they will in the morning when one is sober; only instead of seeing them through beer goggles, one is seeing them through 'fear goggles' because under those conditions someone who seems comforting will be important.

(This is one reason why I think it important for children to learn that there are many people they can like who can like them and treat them nicely. This is why it is important for adolescents and adults to realize, as some people crudely and cruelly put it, "there are many fish in the sea" – that is, there are many, many people whom they can like and who will like them, so that they need not

fear, or become dejected by, rejection from some, that they need not view such rejection as an objective sign of their unworthiness to everyone, that they need not become terribly infatuated with the first person, or every person, who is nice to them or shows an interest in them. There is certainly nothing wrong with young love or infatuations of this sort, but it would probably be less painful in the long run to realize that if the relationship is based mainly or solely on this sort of liking someone simply because they like you, accept you, show an interest in, you, or are nice to you, it may be ill-fated because of the lack of other satisfactions or goods; and/or it may be ill-fated because the infatuation may cease when the person finds out many others may also show the same interest and consideration.)

What is important then, in terms of satisfaction, is what is important to a particular person at a particular time under particular circumstances. No satisfactions of equal ethical value can be or should be considered to be any more important than any other without reference to person, time, and circumstance.

I used to think some areas were more important for (continued) happiness than others – that, for instance, people who mostly enjoyed talking to each other were somehow better off or somehow potentially better off in terms of their relationship's enduring happily than say people who just mostly enjoyed having silent sex with each other. But I am no longer certain about that. I no longer believe that being able to discuss problems will always help you solve them in a relationship; it also takes goodwill and empathy or sympathy for the other person, and it takes both partners wanting to work out problems and having some insight and understanding how to do that. If the two of you have no need nor desire to talk much with each other, then enjoying dancing, sex, or bowling frequently might be every bit as satisfying as having discussions is to more cerebrally inclined people. And I am not certain that people who have good sex but other sorts of problems they cannot solve are any worse off than people who have sexual or emotional

problems they cannot solve no matter how much they are able to discuss things.

A relationship with strong sexual gratification and little else may be doomed to failure in terms of being completely satisfying; but then so may one involving little but intellectual gratification. One can have few new ideas every day, certainly too few to be able to provide terribly much conversation for very long with a constant companion. And I am not sure which relationship in general, if either, would be likely to grow old and stale faster. Perhaps for longevity of a relationship, it is important to have a number of areas you enjoy with each other. Perhaps sociologists can determine that.

It is, of course, better not to have problems, or to have the abilities to solve as many problems as can arise; but given normal human limitations, difficult problems will arise in relationships. I would be interested to know whether some are inherently more destructive than others. Of course, there have been statistics available on such supposed causes of divorce as drinking, financial disagreements or problems, religious differences, etc. but these problems may only be symptomatic ones or ones aggravated or caused by other more basic defects in relationships, such as an inability to express feelings or even know one's own feelings or inability to understand a partner's problems or feelings. Are there some abilities or inabilities that are more important for (prolonging) happiness in relationships? I am not as certain as I used to be. It would be nice if social scientists could provide clues about what kinds of gratifications are more likely to remain gratifying for what kinds of people and relationships, if any. And hopefully, these clues would be accompanied by insights into their causal, and not just their statistically probable, nature.

In terms of satisfaction alone, not total value of the relationship, the somewhat perhaps simplistic relationship between Archie and Edith Bunker is perhaps a very satisfying relationship for them, though it would not be for people such as Gloria Steinem or Alan Alda.

But if Archie and Edith are happy with each other, and if they are doing the best they can, given where they are in life, what more, if anything, can be reasonably asked or wanted in their relationship?

Is the Most Enjoyable Relationship The Best Relationship?

The distinction between satisfaction on the one hand and other kinds of ethical goodness or value on the other prompts a question that is like the question to be raised in the ethics chapter – whether happiness (or call it satisfaction or contentment) is the single most important, or ultimately only, goal of people's lives. I will try to show there that it is not, that the person with the happiest existence is not therefore the person leading the best life. But here let me just say that the people with the most satisfactory or satisfying relationships are not, therefore, the persons with the best relationships necessarily. For example, the soppy-dependent housewife who may be happy, but who has given up even unknowingly any opportunity for personal growth and development and/or accomplishment at the expense of that happiness.

But again, just in regard to the area of satisfaction alone, certainly physical beauty and sexual gratification can, and in many cases do, fade; but so can intellectual satisfactions as well as emotional ones. I am not certain that there is any one or any set of satisfactions that will necessarily guaranty to happily or satisfactorily sustain a relationship such as marriage through a long period of time. It might also vary for different people. It might be the ability not to change (if that is an ability) or, more likely I would think, the ability to adapt to each others' changes in a successful way that does not make either party unhappy. And if each person changes in a way that makes them even more satisfying to the other, then all the better for the relationship. This is one way in which love or a loving relationship can grow more loving. It is all too rare perhaps, but it does happen.

Sometimes in a relationship, a woman, say, if she was not this way before, may start to grow independent in many of her actions from her husband. She may begin to work outside the home, becoming successful; may learn to play new sports such as tennis or golf, etc.

In short, she may not depend on him for her achievements or for her emotional needs in the way she did before. Now this may cause a boon to their marriage if he likes her all the more as a person this way and if she is a better person to him as well as to herself because of it. Or, as in too many cases, it can wreak havoc in the marriage because either the husband becomes insecure or jealous and cannot handle it or because the woman feels she has outgrown her husband with her new life and finds she is not interested in him anymore. Or she may simply become too busy to be able to meet some of his legitimate needs or desires. Or he may have too many unreasonable and selfish needs to be able to cope with her new independence.

I used to think non-contemplative or ignorant people were less likely to have happiness or happy relationships – that somewhere in their lives something bad would happen they could not cope with and that they had not prepared for. But I don't any longer think life always works that way. Some people are just dumb lucky. T hey often don't even notice things that would bother other people, or they just incorrectly accept them as inevitable and go on about their business. They may not have the best lives but they may have the happier or more satisfying lives or relationships. For some, ignorance is bliss, though just not best.

In some cases where stability and sameness are due to unwavering traditions, no matter how unreasonable or bad the traditions, long term happiness is more easily achieved because what happens is expected and what is expected and (thought to be desirable and therefore) desired happens. In contrast, change, no matter how much for the better it might be, may cause difficult adjustment and may be dissatisfying to some who are less flexible and less interested in surprise.

People who are neither dumb nor lucky often do need some guidance in working out relationship problems or knowing how and when to terminate in the most agreeable way a relationship which, perhaps not through anybody's fault, has grown irreparably bad, either through loss of feelings of attraction, loss of satisfactions, or

loss of goodness. Certainly many people change throughout their lives and the changes may bring dissatisfactions or problems to their relationships. And these may be dissatisfactions that are insurmountable without more sacrifice or harm than is fair to ask or allow. But it seems to me that most of the problems that arise in relationships, even those that may call for "ending" a relationship do not call for any particularly great intelligence nor for deep or endless analysis to solve. It seems to me that most people with anywhere near normal intelligence and verbal ability can deal with each other about their relationship if they have some understanding of ethical behavior and some psychological insight into their, and their partner's, needs and joys and wants. And if both want to try to work out their problems rationally, amicably, and fairly.

On one *All in the Family* episode, Archie mistakenly tried to pursue a romantic attraction for a waitress who had repeatedly flirted with him. It was at a time that he was particularly vulnerable to someone else's interest in him because he was feeling ignored and abandoned by Edith who was doing time-consuming work that was exciting to her at a nursing home. Edith found out about the waitress, and told Archie she saw why he liked the girl – because the girl was younger looking and prettier than she. But Archie had already come to his senses and simply told Edith he had simply done a stupid thing, having momentarily lost his head, and that Edith did not have to worry about her looks to him at all because (in his characteristic backhanded complementary and sensible explanation) "the good Lord saw to it that as he and other people got older, their eyes lost the ability to see things that weren't any more important anyway." It was not the waitress's looks that had flattered and tempted Archie, but her interest in him at a time when he felt Edith had lost that interest. That was what was important to him then. And he knew that and tried to tell it to Edith.

Of course, *All in the Family* was written by people with insight, but people with less verbal or analytic ability often do have the kind of knowledge, if not wit, to explain their feelings, their actions, and

their concerns to their loved ones and then solve the problems they face. I no longer think an intellectually gratifying relationship is necessarily likely to be happier longer than one that is primarily say sexually gratifying. There will probably be enough intellect involved, or at least there could be, in the sexually gratifying relationship to solve problems that can be solved in it.

"I didn't really believe you when you said sex was not necessarily the most important thing in love. But now that I have been married for a year, I have to admit that you were right. Sex is great, but the thing I appreciate and enjoy even more is that when I wake up in the middle of the night and cannot get back to sleep [my husband], even if he is very tired, will keep himself awake and just talk to me until I am relaxed and comforted enough to fall back to sleep. That is the nicest thing." – a friend of mine.

Key Takeaways

- Figuring out what is important in a relationship to you, and in what way(s) it or they are important.
- Sex or the thought of sex may be very pleasant at some times and not pleasant at all at other times. Sex and food are not too different in this regard; when you are fully satisfied by either, the thought of more of it is not always pleasurable.

Key Terms

- ***Unrequited love*** is being loved by those who excite no passion in you.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What are three different issues related to the importance of satisfactions in relationships?
- ***Question***: What is sometimes at least as bad as the frustrations of your unrequited love or even unrequited desire for someone else?

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Chapter 12 Sex and Love

Chapter 12 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Conclude that sexual desire is neither necessary nor sufficient to be the sort of attraction for love.
- Identify the nuances about sex.
- Discriminate between many emotional aspects of sex that are similar to other interests and activities.

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Having said that sexual attraction is neither necessary nor sufficient for a relationship to be one of love and having claimed that no kind of satisfaction as such is, in general – without reference to particular people at particular times – necessarily more important than any other, it is necessary to discuss ***sex*** in particular since many, perhaps most, Americans (mistakenly, I believe) think sex somehow stands apart from the other things in life. They endow it with a psychological significance far beyond the morally important considerations of pregnancy or venereal disease. Sex education in the schools is a live issue; math is not. Movies are marked or rated according to their sexual content (and more recently to some extent, to the content of their violence) but not according to their stupidity or the economic, political, historical, or other kinds of content. Anatomy and sex are either censored or exploited in ways and to the extent that few other aspects of life are. To some, sex and sexual feelings are animalistic and beneath the dignity of man; others find it perhaps one of the greatest aspects of life. The

wedding night or first marital intercourse is said to consummate the marriage, whereas writing a book together, brushing your teeth together, going through a crisis together, teaming up for a grand slam in bridge together, etc. do not have such exalted status. And although marital intercourse is supposed to consummate a relationship, extramarital intercourse can be the curse that destroys one. Further, although some people become jealous if their (romantic) loved one has any sort of interaction with someone else, still most only become jealous when they suspect their loved one of harboring some sort of sexual desire for, or having some sort of sexual conduct with, another person. One might perfectly well allow one's love to talk to, play golf, bridge, or tennis with, or even dance, attend a party or a movie with another without any jealousy; but not so with the idea of their having sexual interaction with, or even sexual interest in, someone else.

Not everyone shares such views about sex, of course, but even those with the most so-called liberal views, when answering a survey, for example, see nothing strange about questions asking whether marriage, love, or affection was a necessary condition for kissing or petting or whatever. I suspect a similar survey asking them whether marriage, love, or affection was necessary for choosing a tennis partner, chess opponent, barber, money-lender, or person to sell your house to, would seem strange or ludicrous indeed.

There are many books and articles available about sexual technique. Some are better than others in the advice they offer. There is nothing wrong with knowing about technique, for even the greatest attractions and the otherwise greatest love relationships can run into some difficulty where there is virtual ignorance about giving or getting physical pleasure or satisfying one's partner's or even one's own sexual desires. But, of course, technique just for its own sake can also be of little value. Almost any X-rated movie will give unintentional witness to the emptiness of even "expert" technique where there is no passion or desire. Actors methodically going through various gyrations in various contortionistic or

stereotypical positions with obviously no real interest or even feigned pleasure don't make sex look desirable. And the scenes in which they obviously have to work painfully and laboriously to maintain or conclude their "passion" make it seem even undesirable. And certainly there are few times one wants to have sex with someone who you feel is turning pages in their head as they pursue technique, oblivious to its purpose of satisfying each other. (Heaven help the partner of the person who skips a page, or who has to reach for the book for help.) Perhaps trying something new for the first time may be awkward and technical rather than passionate and satisfying, but this at least may be excusable on the grounds that learning something may be difficult at first, but rewarding, if of value, when better learned and later more natural. Total lack of technique (that is, total lack of understanding of how to please or to begin to please or how to even go about finding out what might please the other person or one's self) is not very physically satisfying; but total reliance on technique alone is not very emotionally gratifying even in those cases where it may give physical pleasure. And in some cases, passionless, mechanical technique will not even give physical pleasure.

At any rate, there is a place for technical sexual knowledge and skill to at least some extent, but since there are numerous books and articles on the subject (some good, some terrible), I will not dwell on that and will instead be more interested here first in the emotional aspects of sex, second in the false and misleading notion of sex as some form of communication, and finally in the ethical aspect of sex, giving some ideas about what people might meaningfully consider in deciding when and under what circumstances various degrees or types of sexual activity might be right or not.

I would like to say one thing, first, however, about different handbooks offered as guides to satisfying sexual technique, and that is to advise you to take what they say with a grain of salt and a certain guardedness, particularly if you are somewhat inexperienced about sex. From even just a physical pleasure point of view, I would not want to be touched by at least one author

who advises what men like. I wouldn't like those things. The main point of technique is to give and get pleasure. If any particular technique does not do that with any particular person, modify or abandon the technique for that person. Don't keep at it because it is supposed "to work". If it does not feel good to them, it does not feel good to them. They are a better judge of their own pleasure and what they like than the book is. A sex technique book can give you ideas to explore for trying to please your partner and yourself – it cannot give guarantees those ideas will always work. In many cases different people seem to like to be touched in different ways, often in different places. This is not only with regard to sex but even with regard to a backrub (or backscratch) or any kind of massage. I love to have my back scratched medium hard, particularly along the backbone about shoulder blade high, and along the ridges of the shoulder blades. Receiving a backrub is all right, but I can take it or leave it. By wife and children hate to have their backs rubbed or scratched.

One girl I know loves to have her husband massage her foot and her calf. A foot massage just feels kind of strange to me. Some people like a light massage of their muscles and skin; others, heavier; some, either way; and some, not at all. In backrubs and massage, it literally is different strokes for different folks. Similarly for sexual touching; so any manual that is dogmatic and narrowly prescriptive is not likely to serve everyone's pleasure.

The Emotional Aspect of Sex

Love and sex can be unrelated in that one can have sex with someone one does not love – at least not in terms of a full, satisfying, good, romantic relationship. In the extreme case, certainly, rape is sex without love. But more normally, one might have perfunctory sex with a partner one no longer cares for but whom one may not want to turn away with hurt feelings. (One might also have sex with a loved one but at a time that one is not really in the mood, but is being kind – this is not so much sex without love as it is sex without desire immediately before or during.) One might

have an intentional "one or few nights stand"; there may even be a certain amount of knowingly temporary or simply physical passion or emotional need connected with it. One may have sex with a friend or someone one dates and finds sexually enjoyable but has no great general attraction for. Or one might be aroused at some time and not be terribly discriminating about who helps physically satisfy that arousal. I am not saying sex without much love is good or satisfying necessarily; I will address that soon. I am only saying here that it is at least possible for at least some people.

Also, there may be cases of *love* without *sex* due to perhaps long distances separating the lovers or because of some sort of voluntary abstinence based on fear, personal, or ethical grounds (maybe the lovers are not married or are married to other persons they believe would be wrongfully hurt) or maybe the lovers are too young or too old (if that ever happens) or too ill or physically or psychologically impotent or uninterested in sex. Certainly, some conditions make sex unwanted or impossible temporarily: tiredness or illness for example; worry over health, finances, a friend or relative's well-being, an exam, job, or some other assignment; preoccupation with a task that requires full concentration, etc. Before the advent of birth control pills families that had air conditioning in their homes tended to conceive more children in the summer than those without, presumably because hot summer nights were just often too uncomfortable without air conditioning for sex or the thought of sex.

Another sort of temporary condition "thwarting" sex or sexual feelings is for many people the time immediately following a very satisfying sexual time together. This is not to say necessarily after one orgasm or twenty or maybe even none – the numbers are not what I am referring to, but the satisfaction or fulfillment of the time together. And yet after such a time together, people may feel more love but less sexual desire for each other than before; they may feel closer to each other than before. It is simply at this point that sexual excitement and desire is both fulfilled and temporarily extinguished. Sometimes, when one just wants to cuddle and lie close to another,

sexual arousal may appear when it really is not wanted. Orgasm(s) then may quiet that sexual arousal and allow the quiet cuddling that was desired in the first place.

Before actually starting to discuss the emotional aspect of sex, an obvious but perhaps often forgotten point must be mentioned: sex is not always physically good or satisfying, even when health, psychological state, and circumstances are otherwise favorable for good sex. An orgasm may happen sooner than wanted or expected; or later; or not at all. Or, time having nothing to do with it, the orgasm may just sort of appear without the sensual build-up –sometimes even after prolonged foreplay– that helps make sex physically pleasurable. Orgasm may not be an explosive, inspiring, satisfying event but just a whimper that makes you feel somehow robbed of the proper ending. Sex may be painful whether at entry, build-up, or orgasm due to friction or its lack, size, positioning, or whatever. Something such as a condom, though it may sometimes add to comfort during intercourse, may cause some discomfort during ejaculation. Some of these things may affect just one partner or they may affect both. Sex might be very physically satisfying for one partner and yet simultaneously quite the opposite for the other. Certainly, sex can be very satisfying physically, but one should keep in mind that even on a physical level there can be such a thing as uncomfortable, even painful, empty, or just plain bad sex. And this may be between partners who generally at other times have had good sex with each other as well as between partners who may not have yet learned very much about (how to please) each other. Many people's first sexual experience involves some physical difficulties. And many men, present company included, also have tried to unroll a condom and then put it on – which is a backward sequence that is not devoid of some pain, much embarrassment, and not a little difficulty in maintaining an erection. Condoms by some manufacturers now come with instructions, but if someone has not read them before a sexual experience, they are not likely to have

the desire, sufficient light, patience, or sufficiently patient partner to read them during one.

Impotence, whether temporary or chronic, is not particularly conducive to good sex unless manual or oral sex is satisfying to the impotent person's partner.

Now for many people, good physical sex is often only one element of a good sexual experience, and in some ways the least important element. For them emotional involvement, even if temporary, may be more important than orgasmic fulfillment.

Not all sex is emotionally very satisfying, as countless wives of brutish, clumsy, or selfish men and countless husbands of selfish, inept, clumsy or passive, passionless women could testify. Sex with a stranger or new lover may be uncertain; sex with a long-time lover or mate can be too perfunctory. Other things may be on one's mind, not enough to prevent physical satisfaction, but enough to prohibit emotional satisfaction. Something disappointing or hurtful might be said during or after sex that spoils it emotionally. Sometimes, even among the most romantic of people, physical dissatisfaction can block emotional satisfaction; the two are not always independent. Emotionally, feelings of guilt or fear of pregnancy may wreak havoc with an otherwise physically satisfying encounter. In pre-marital or extra-marital relationships these problems may be intensified with added fears of being discovered and embarrassed or punished.

Some people perhaps want as part of the sexual experience the other person to be emotionally committed to them in some long time loving way. Others perhaps seek only at least a temporary emotional concern by their partner for them. If it is more lasting, fine; but if not, that is all right as long as it is at least a genuine caring at the time. Sometimes even that is not necessary in at least two different kinds of cases. In one case, one may know that his or her partner is not feeling emotionally close at the particular time but knows that there is an overriding love or emotional bond, one which is usually evident or that has been evident in the past and will probably also be evident again in the future. So that on this

particular occasion although the partner may only seek physical gratification, or even just may be obliging the one who seeks some sort of physical gratification, that may be okay. Second, there may be times when both partners are simply physically or sexually attracted to each other at the time and the physical release is all that is important to both. To some extent, this may involve an at least temporarily emotional gratification or experience as well, since in any activity, whether sex or otherwise, it is often difficult to have a really good time with someone else and not therefore also feel at least something for them.

In fact, in most ways, I think sex is like many other areas of life. It, like other things, simply is often more satisfying when enjoyed mutually with someone whom you like and who likes you and with whom you have a fuller relationship overlapping into other areas. A few tiny examples are simply such as preferring to share a good meal, especially one you cooked yourself, with someone you really care about. Or even in, say, a trivial area like playing tennis, suppose you have a special friend you play a great deal of tennis with. Then suppose one day when you are playing a total stranger, with your friend not around, you play the best tennis of your life or have one of the best, most fiercely contested matches you have ever had, with great shots and great efforts on both sides. Wouldn't it have been more satisfying if your usual partner had been your opponent for such a match, or at least seen it to help share your joy? Special people often make especially good moments even more satisfying. In *Silent Night, Lonely Night*, Lloyd Bridges tells Shirley Jones that his mother always said the best part of a good meal was sharing it with friends.

On the other hand, some things are best not shared at all or are best shared with strangers. In the same movie, the character portrayed by Bridges had much sorrow in his life that his closest friends all knew about. If he were home at Christmas time, friends would invite him over, but he always felt it was only out of kindness or pity; and the sorrow over his past family tragedies, which was

especially acute in Christmas season when others were sharing time with their families, would weigh heavily upon them all. No, for him it was better to be with a stranger at Christmas, one who did not know of his losses and with whom he could enjoy simply the present good, whether sexual or otherwise, without past tragedies impinging upon the relationship and the moments together.

And many, of course, feel that some bad times or bad experiences are better to go through alone. Some people would rather have good company or a special friend with them to help soften bad times or unsatisfactory times, whereas others, like me, would rather be alone, would rather not have to have others also experience the unpleasantness with them. In a somewhat trivial way, this was always a problem with going to a movie, concert, or play. If it were going to be good, I would like to have a special friend with me; if it were going to be terrible, I would just as soon not have a special friend have to endure it. And you could not know ahead of time whether it would be an enjoyable play, movie, concert or not, so I always had to make some sort of decision about inviting a friend or not. One of my better experiences was the time I went to a movie that had only two showings remaining, both that night. I went alone to the first showing. Before the feature, there was an absolutely stunning short film that was one of the most beautiful and well-done pieces I had ever seen. I tried to get in touch with a very special friend so she could come to see the last performance, but I could not reach her. Then just before the last performance began, she came to the theater on her own, just by chance. I was overjoyed. We sat through the short together, and as I watched it for the second time, I also watched her face show she enjoyed it as much as I did. It was a special moment for both of us. We both knew that. I left the theater then to let her watch the feature alone, a feature which was not too bad but which I enjoyed far less than the short and did not especially care to see again.

Problems can arise between people who have different outlooks or feelings about whether being together is more important than

what you do together. For example, two people may go to a movie that neither likes, and one of them may feel depressed that they wasted time and money on the movie, or may be depressed by the theme of the movie or any of a number of things associated with the experience. The other person may not be depressed at all, feeling that though the movie itself was a waste, the time spent together made up for the worthlessness of the movie. This person may feel very loving and content whereas the depressed person may feel frustrated, upset, inattentive, and unloving at the time. People do behave this way; there are those who find sharing more important than what, or the quality of what, is shared, and there are those who find sharing only good if what is shared is good and satisfactory.

Before returning to sex with regard to all this, let me make one more related point. We speak of "sharing experiences" or "sharing emotions" with someone else, of "having the same emotions", the "same feelings" as someone else. In one sense this is possible but in another sense it is not. Having the same emotions or sharing an experience is more like wearing the same dress to a party than it is like sharing the same candy bar. When two women wear "the same" dress to a party, that does not mean they have only one dress between them and that either they are both simultaneously in it or that they keep switching it back and forth between them while one hides out undressed in a bathroom or closet. It simply means that the two are wearing different dresses which are exactly similar (at least in style and color, though maybe not necessarily in size, cost, or manufacturer). There are two different dresses, not one dress. When two people share a candy bar, that means there is only one candy bar and they are both eating from it; they each have different parts of it.

Now emotions and, in a sense, experiences are private things. My emotions are the ones I have, and yours are the ones you have; and although we might have exactly similar ones (like two women wearing similar dresses to a party), we never have the same ones (in the candy bar sense). Emotions are not the kinds of things we can share in the candy bar sense. Whether our emotions are exactly

similar or not, you experience yours and not mine; I experience mine, not yours.

With regard to sex:

1) There are times one may not feel very loving or interested in sex at all. Or one may not be in the mood for the kind of sex one's mate likes. If one's mood cannot be changed, sex is not likely to be a good experience at such a time.

2) If the sex is not physically good for one partner, but is for the other, the emotional state of the one partner may not match that of the other.

3) Even if the physical sensations are the same (that is, exactly similar) for both, the two may not react the same in terms of their appreciation (or distress) or emotions. One may find the sharing or time together most important; the other, how good or bad the experience was. This can easily color attitudes and emotions toward each other. For example, a temporarily impotent man may be far more upset than his partner. Or he may perfectly well understand the situation and not be upset by it whereas the partner may feel frustrated or unattractive and unalluring, though this may not be the case nor the cause. Books, movies, magazine articles, and real life are filled with misunderstandings and hurt feelings caused by different emotional responses or feelings about particular shared events. This can be even if the sex is physically very enjoyable for both. One may say "you were really beautiful," and the other reply "yeah, that was really great". The first is talking about the sharing with that particular person and how they acted and/or responded whereas the second seems to minimize or miss all that and think of only how good it felt, perhaps also unintentionally implying with whom it was shared was secondary.

Now sex is not totally unique in this way. There are other activities people can share or do together where they may come out at cross purposes or different feelings. I have already mentioned movies, but just about anything two people do together can end up this

way. Viewing a sunset on a chilly evening, one may be warmed by the beauty, ignoring the cold; the other may be cold and miss the beauty. Or both may see the beauty, but one wanting to run to get his camera to record it, the other only wanting to stand arm in arm or in a loving embrace in its splendor. To the one, the tender moment is lost while the other's mind is on getting the objective visual element of the experience on film.

But, you may say, movies, sunset and sports viewing are the kinds of things that are passive to the extent neither person, simply as viewer (rather than as commentator) adds to the experience, and that sex is different in that the people themselves help create the experience and its quality for themselves and for each other. When sex is good physically and emotionally, it is because the partners each contributed in such a way to make it that way. Furthermore, the actions and the response are almost simultaneous, and there is an immediacy of feeling and response that can induce further response, again almost immediately.

But this same could be said of playing ping pong or chess, of dancing, conversation, or of performing music together. In chess between masters of the game perhaps every move is filled with anticipation and the kind of mental stimulation that the crowning move caps off. In ping pong or tennis, perhaps certain shots or certain rallies or certain moves of the opponents show early that something special is taking place. In ballroom dancing, the beauty and satisfaction is directly and immediately created by the couple themselves; likewise in good conversation and good musical ensembles, particularly unrehearsed "jam" sessions.

Certainly, the physical feelings of sex are different from the physical feelings of playing tennis or of writing a good book in collaboration with each other, but the emotional responses may be fairly similar. One tennis player may put more emphasis on who won; another, on how well each played regardless of who won. Some people do not enjoy a match they win just because they slightly outplay a poorly playing opponent as much as they enjoy a match that stretches their ability and makes them play very well,

even though they lose to an opponent that plays even better. Two people who feel this latter way can both feel good about the match and about each other though one won and one lost. Whereas the feelings might be quite different between opponents who place sole importance on whether they won or lost; or between such a person and the person interested primarily in the character of his play, not the outcome of the score.

Likewise in a discussion where much information is transferred between the parties. One may be excited about what was learned and the other more excited that it was learned or taught to (or by) that person. One may appreciate the experience more; the other, the information.

I used to think that one of the ways that sex was unique was that though other kinds of good experiences with a lover led you to want to make love, good love-making did not lead you to want to do other things. But that is not true. First, a good loving session might make you want to talk. And it might allow a more honest, open, comfortable, and meaningful discussion than there otherwise would be. It might make you hungry and want to go out for a pizza or Chinese food or to have wine and spaghetti by candlelight. It might make you want to go for a walk on the beach together or to write poetry. Or it might make you want to cuddle in each others' arms or caress each other tenderly – which can be different from sex (so that though cuddling and caressing can lead to sex, sex can also lead to cuddling and caressing). Good sex might make you feel like doing a chore you otherwise did not feel like doing earlier. On the other hand, a great tennis match or terrific intellectual conversation might leave you too exhausted or too keyed up to care about sex.

Sex cannot necessarily be viewed as the goal of either a relationship or even a period of time together. It is true that often people have sex at night and then go to sleep, or have sex so that they can go to sleep; but often people, when they are too tired to have sex, go to sleep so that they can have sex once they are rested. Also, with me, physically and emotionally good sex often revives

and invigorates me so much that I cannot sleep and do not want to anyway. Sex can cap off an evening, but it can also begin an evening. Actor Michael Caine, in a newspaper article I happened to see long ago, talked about the proper seductive sequence for an evening and then ended this perhaps tongue-in-cheek interview by saying that it might be better just to have your sex with each other before you go out so that the evening out does not have to be thought of by either as a seduction, but can instead be enjoyed for itself. Lots of things can lead to sex, but sex can also lead to lots of other things.

Sex, when it is good, both emotionally and physically is one of the good things in life; but it is hardly the only good thing; and though one of the best things, only one on a long list of "best things". Experiencing or creating great beauty or great goodness or great truths together in whatever sphere can in their own ways be equally as exciting, fulfilling and rewarding. And perhaps contrary to public opinion, sex is not the only thing on people's minds. Perhaps it is under deprivation conditions when they cannot have the kind of experience they want to have. But when sex is satisfied, other things often leap to the forefront (except for people who just turn over and go to sleep so they can have more sex when they wake up – generally though I would think there would be a limit to this and its satisfaction). When you are in the mood for sex, tennis or work will not interest you much. But when you are in the mood to play tennis, write poetry, read a book, or do almost anything, sex may not be particularly enticing at all. How many otherwise loving and sexually active partners have momentarily spurned their romantically inclined mates because they just had to finish watching some tv program in which they had become engrossed or because they were working on something (even unpleasant, such as a tax return) they wanted to finish before doing anything else.

So I suspect sex, apart from its particular kinds of unique physical feelings, the possibility of pregnancy, and the possibility of venereal disease in some cases, is not that much different from other potentially good areas of life which we can share with each other.

With regard to any experience, there are certain possible combinations:

(1) We might enjoy something while experiencing it alone.

(2) We might not enjoy something while being there alone.

(3) We might enjoy something and be with a person we like who also enjoys the experience.

(4) We might enjoy something and be with a person we like who does not enjoy the experience.

(5) In this latter case, the person (a) may or (b) may not be able to understand our enjoyment.

(6) We might enjoy something and be with a person we do not like who also enjoys the experience.

(7) We might enjoy something and be with a person we do not like who does not enjoy the experience.

(8) In this latter case, the person (a) may or (b) may not understand how we can enjoy the experience.

(9) We might not enjoy something and be with someone we like who does enjoy the experience.

(10) In this case we (a) may or (b) may not understand how they can enjoy the experience.

(11) We may not enjoy something and be with someone we like who also does not enjoy it.

(12) We may not enjoy something and be with someone we do not like who does enjoy the experience.

(13) In this case, we (a) may or (b) may not understand how they can enjoy the experience.

(14) We may not enjoy something and be with someone we do not like who also may not enjoy the experience.

Before I go on to talk about this, let me elaborate a bit. We like and dislike other people in various degrees (it is not an all or none thing) from extreme aversion to extreme attraction. Also we experience things in various degrees from extreme dissatisfaction to extreme enjoyment. To that extent, the above list is abbreviated. There is a further complication the list ignores, which I will deal with shortly.

However, first, with regard to many experiences or kinds of

experiences, we can rank the categories above as to our preferences. For example, though there are certain experiences I would like to have privately or do by myself (such as reading – it is very difficult for some reason for me to concentrate on reading the way I like to if someone else is in the room with me; even reading of substance in a library is nearly impossible for me), with regard to many or most things I would like best to enjoy them with someone I like who also enjoys them. But I would rather sit alone through a play or movie or any experience which turns out to be terrible than to have taken someone I like to it and have them suffer through it too. There are times when misery does not love company – at least for me. Further, one of the things I hate the most is to really enjoy something with someone I like who does not enjoy it and who cannot really understand how I do. Now not everyone's preferences will fall in the same order. For example, some people do not find it horribly important how good the movie or whatever is as long as they are with someone they like – whether either one of them enjoys the movie or the experience itself or not.

The complication I referred to earlier is that some of the variables can affect the others. For example, doing something with someone we dislike (whether by force, or by chance, as in a blind date) can keep us from enjoying what would otherwise be a pleasant experience; or doing something which would otherwise be unpleasant with someone we like might help us enjoy the experience. In any given case one might not be able to say whether an experience was pleasant or not apart from the company, but I will assume that for many cases we can do this and that for many cases it makes sense to talk about our enjoying a certain experience apart from how other things or the company affected it. We might have had a rotten time at a movie and not have enjoyed the movie at all because the kids kept pestering us or because our date was obnoxious, but we might still know perfectly well it was a movie we would enjoy if we could see it alone, or with someone we like. It is not always the company we have but sometimes other conditions

too which can increase or decrease particular enjoyments. For example, otherwise good food might not taste very good if it looks bad or if we have to eat it in a place where there is a bad odor or bugs running around. Commercials can sometimes spoil a television program, or they can enhance it by giving one a chance to reflect on what has just occurred or on what has just been said. Someone else's table manners or remarks can spoil an otherwise good dinner. My sister as a little girl seemed to enjoy the dog biscuit I convinced her would be delicious and considered a delicacy by most people.

Many people would like to share their good moments with others; when we see a good movie or beautiful scene or when we find a good restaurant, we tell others or wish they were there to share it with us to enjoy it too. Gordie Howe upon being asked whether he thought anyone else would score 800 career hockey goals replied: "If they get close I'd sure be rooting for them; it's such a tremendous experience I hope others might have it too." It is nice when others we like or think deserving can share our joys with us and appreciate them as we do. This is true of many things, not just sex.

So, working only with categories 1 and 3 from the list above, consider the following statement by David M. Wulff in an article in a publication (*Perspectives*) available to University of Michigan students one year (full citation not available). After asserting that masturbation could be a good thing he goes on to say "but the mutuality of interpersonal [sexual] expression promises fulfillment masturbation can never provide." He does not argue this nor does he explain quite what he means here. I have also heard a physician assert that heterosexual activity is better than masturbation though masturbation might be extremely pleasant and have nothing wrong with it. I am puzzled at these statements, particularly perhaps in light of Masters and Johnson's report that there is no physiological difference found between the two types of sexual build-up and release. One answer might be that sexual arousal and release through orgasm, although feeling good in itself, is only one of the pleasures one experiences in successful heterosexual intercourse; that is, one also feels good to know the other person has had such

a good feeling too, and further that they were able to experience it because of something you did (and vice versa, and that you are a good "team" or sexual "partnership"). But if this is the only difference between masturbation and heterosexual activity, this does not set sex off from other endeavors. E.g., playing good bridge might thus be more rewarding than playing solitaire. Going for a beautiful walk with a friend is better than going alone. Playing good tennis with an opponent might be more rewarding than playing against the hitting wall or a ball machine. Playing music in a quartet, band, or orchestra might be more rewarding than playing alone.

And Wulff has some reservations against masturbation: "If one becomes accustomed to a particular type or rate of stimulation, to fantasies of one kind or another, or to specific circumstances for sexual arousal, he may not have the flexibility, responsiveness, or even interest necessary to achieve the free and total intimacy and unity that characterizes a sexually- expressed relationship at its best."

First, if he means by "unity" having the same feelings at the same time, I pointed out earlier that we can only achieve that in terms of having identical feelings, not sharing the same (one) feeling and that even that depends on both the physical and emotional experience of the act. We never have a unity of consciousness – two people, one consciousness.

Second, his objection would seem also to hold against ever having just one partner – you might get so used to each other that if one of you (re-) married someone else, you might not be able to adapt. Further, one might vary one's autosexual techniques; and there is some evidence that some people who masturbate perhaps are more responsive to nuance and/or are more aware of their own and their partner's needs and how to meet them and so are better, not worse, lovers because of it. (The comedic expression of this appears in one of Woody Allen's movies, where when a woman compliments him on his love-making ability, his explanation is that he practices a lot when he is alone.) And certainly solitaire is not a help to bridge

playing, but neither is it a hindrance. It is unrelated, and it serves a different purpose. Likewise playing tennis against a wall is not like playing it against an opponent, but it is probably better than not being able to play at all when you want to. Further, this is an activity that can improve your tennis against an opponent – if you do not, also in this kind of solo activity, just get so used to one rhythm or one kind of shot that you cannot respond to the variety of rhythms and shots of different opponents. Solo wall tennis is great when you want to practice some particular shots or skills or when you want to wear yourself out faster than you probably would in a game, or when you want to hit the ball really hard to take out some frustration or other on the ball and the wall. Solo musical practice also gives you an opportunity to improve your playing.

Further, being able to play bridge with one partner or being able to defeat one tennis player does not mean you will be any good with a second bridge partner or against a second tennis player, but this is no reason not to play with or against some other person.

And, as I said earlier, sex between two people is not always satisfying. A good masturbating episode might be worth far more than a dismal heterosexual one – whether dismal for physical or emotional causes or both. In the same way tennis against the wall might be far more rewarding than tennis with a partner either too good or too poor a player or too uncompanionable for you. Solitaire might be more rewarding than a lousy bridge game. Enjoying a movie or fine cuisine alone might be far more enjoyable than sharing it with an insensitive boor. Or sometimes with tennis, music, reading, sex, thinking, or whatever, one might just prefer to be alone, for whatever reason.

Further, with regard to numbers 4, 7, 9, and 12, which would apply to a case like rape or simply to one partner's not enjoying an act of intercourse for any of a host of reasons, masturbation or abstinence or something else might indeed be preferable. But then it is not much fun to go to a concert with someone who hates music or to teach someone who does not like learning or to play tennis with

someone who keeps complaining about the heat, or who may not complain but who you know does not like doing what he is doing. My favorite movie is Dr. Zhivago, but I know people who only see it as a frozen wasteland movie or as a movie about two people extra-maritally "fooling around". I wouldn't even want to discuss it with them, let alone see it with them. Likewise, I personally would not really be interested in having sex with anyone who just considered it fun or "fooling around" or to whom it did not mean anything other than a way to kill some time enjoyably on a physical level.

Further, sex is certainly more enjoyable with someone we like and with whom we want to have sex than with someone we do not, other things being equal. A woman who enjoys consenting intercourse with someone she likes and wants to have sex with at the time might not appreciate rape, nor even sex with that same person when she is angry with him or not interested in sex at the time. But that does not set sex apart from other activities, many of which often are more enjoyable with someone we like at the time and with whom we want to share that activity than with someone or at some time we do not. For example, many men do not like playing golf with their wives, even though their wives may be good golfers and even though they may love their wives and enjoy doing lots of other things with them. And it is often not even much fun to talk with someone you dislike, let alone play golf or bridge with them or have intercourse with them.

Now some people seem to think that sexual intercourse somehow brings two people's minds closer together, that it allows them more than any other experience to share each other's feelings and thoughts. But it seems to me that two people can have sort of communion of spirit from many other activities also – walking together in a midnight snowfall, watching their child take its first steps, finishing an important joint project, dancing, playing chess, playing ping pong, analyzing or creating a work of art, etc., etc., etc. Further, a communion of spirit or sharing of feelings is simply having similar feelings by both at the same time, perhaps with both

realizing they are having similar feelings. It is not the having of one feeling shared by two consciousness's. People can have similar feelings at the same time, but that is hardly so mystical as some supposed sharing of minds or mixing of psychic entities in some way or other. I do not know whether anyone actually holds that sharing an experience is some psychic fusion, but I suspect from the aura or wonder that surrounds this sharing that many people somehow do hold it. Certainly there is no mystique in two people having the same (that is, identical or similar) feelings after each is hit in the left knee by a hammer; and in that case certainly there are two pains – one person's and the other's – not just one pain out there somewhere which both partake of. Is it so strange then that two people should have similar feelings after an experience of good and enjoyable love-making together! Of course this does not mean that their feelings in this latter case are not beautiful or wonderful or that it is not somehow miraculous and splendid that they are able to so interact as to get those feelings together; but this miracle or splendor is not the same as some sort of mental fusion or actual "meeting of the minds".

One of the ways sex is different from some aspects of life, but again similar to other areas regarding emotions is that most of us are too shy or insecure or too embarrassed to "let ourselves go" in front of others unless we feel secure that the other person will not ridicule us or laugh at us or find us strange. In short, we need to trust the other to understand or appreciate what we are doing. This is true for many people with regard to anything from reciting poetry to going off a diving board for the first time or who knows what. We can take what we believe to be good-natured kidding about ourselves or the dumb things we do (and we are more likely to believe our friends are being good natured in their jibes), but if we believe the comments to be at all malicious or ridiculing, we tend to be offended, and often embarrassed. Most of us, I suspect, are not too sure our naked bodies are beautiful or in the control we might want them to be. And few of us probably are confident (probably

justifiably) about looking glamorous during sex. And many people are not confident that they are very good at sex – at giving pleasure during it, or still desirable company after it. I would guess this goes a long way to explain our preferring to have sexual activity with those we trust (in this sphere) and also probably like.

But lack of embarrassment in sex may not signify lack of embarrassment to play tennis or talk about financial matters with the other person or any of a host of others, just as being free to talk about money or feelings may still not signify being free to talk about or participate in sex with another. And in some cases, in fact, it seems that sexual intimacy is easier to achieve for some people than other forms of intimacy, and that sexual satisfaction is easier to achieve than other sorts of satisfaction. There have been a number of movies depicting relationships that begin with a great deal of passionate attraction and satisfying sex. As the couple then tries to find other mutually enjoyable and beneficial areas to share, however, they find there are none. In some cases they then even grow to dislike each other, hurt each other, or think ill of each other. Satisfactory sex between two people certainly does not mean that other areas of life will also be satisfactory. And in this age of casual and readily available sex, this may be more often apparent than the converse – that satisfaction in other areas of life between any two people does not necessarily mean that sex between them is warranted or likely to be satisfactory.

So, to summarize, though I do not deny that sex is different from other aspects of life – certainly the particular physical feelings it evokes are different from other kinds of physical feelings, and the emotions those feelings evoke can feel different in some cases from other sorts of emotions – I do deny that it is significantly different; I do deny that it is somehow generally more important or radically unlike other aspects of relationships that involve physical feelings and/or emotions. Emotions caused by sex or by sexual arousal are no better feeling than other good emotions, and in some cases may not even be as good. Sexual emotions do not seem to be significantly different from other emotions.

Of course, sex offers a risk of pregnancy (if the sex includes intercourse and the participants are fertile) and a risk of contracting a venereal disease that other areas of life do not. But many aspects of life have their own particular risks; sex is not unique in having either risks or benefits. And sex with no risk of pregnancy (for example when it does not include actual intercourse or when at least one of the partners is not fertile) is hardly ever considered therefore to be in a different light from sex where there is that risk. (It would hardly be a good excuse or justification for a teenager to give her parents, for a post-menopausal woman to give her husband, or for a sterilized man to give his wife, that their premarital or extramarital partner didn't or couldn't get (them) pregnant, so it was, therefore, nothing to be concerned about.)

All in all, I see nothing about either the risks of sex nor about the physical or emotional feelings of sex that gives it the special – at once exalted and maligned – status it seems to have in our society. I will discuss the ethics of sex later, but even there no special or unique principles will have to be discovered or recognized that would not also apply to other areas of life.

Now I would like to discuss something that is rather whimsical but which I think has an important point lurking behind it, though I cannot quite see that point clearly.

Once, while I was watching a particular episode of *Star Trek* (the original tv series), it made

me think how odd in a way the emotional aspect of sex is. It was an episode in which part of the crew lands on a desolate planet to find only a laboratory housing some jars that glowed brightly. It turned out that these jars contained the intact, still functioning minds of the formerly populated planet's leading scientist and his wife (one in each jar). They – their minds – had been in these jars for centuries, and although they could communicate with each other and with the crew of the Enterprise via telepathy, they were tired of being in the same old place unable to move about, etc. They asked, and were given, permission to take over Captain Kirk's body

and that of a beautiful female astrophysicist temporarily (putting, for the duration, these people mind's in the jars – which then did not glow nearly as brightly) in order to build some robot bodies for themselves. However, the first thing they did upon taking over the two others' bodies was to passionately embrace and kiss. That seemed very touching and romantic at first, but then it made me wonder why they did that, and who, after all, was being kissed, or doing the kissing. Why was it so important for the scientist to kiss this other body with his wife's mind in it, and vice versa? Would he have done so had she been ugly, or in another man's body, or in a dog's?!! Why didn't they just put the jars closer together on the shelf in the first place, touching each other? Why not both be in the same jar? Or if they (i.e., their minds) needed 'space' from each other, just go into another jar far away for a while; and then hop back in the same jar together when they wanted to be together. If either scientist had transferred into the human body first, would it have got the same thrill out of kissing the jar that the other was still in? Other 'body- hopping' spirit/body transferring movies, where people fall in love with the same lover regardless of whose body that lover now 'inhabits' raise this same issue. But the problem then also seems to be the same for just normal kissing (or other emotionally involved physical affection or touching) in general. What exactly does the joy of kissing consist of, apart from just the physical pleasure of it, which I will try to show is not the main point or motivation of it?

And although, I originally wrote this with romantic touching in mind, it also applies, though with different emotions and different sorts of touching, to any sort of affection, whether parent- child, sibling, friends, etc. One survivor of a commercial plane crash filled with passengers said that as they knew the plane was going down, he and the stranger in the seat next to him held hands. He survived, the other man did not. In fact, the man and the pilot were the only survivors. What was comforting or important about their holding hands as opposed to just sitting next to each other? I think that if it were me in that situation, I might hold the hand of a fellow

passenger I felt some sort of bond with, even if just during the flight, but not with just anyone; and for me possibly even only with a woman I felt some sort of bond with, not a man.

But either way, what is it about holding hands in that particular situation that makes it seem understandable for people to do as they think they are about to die or suffer greatly, if they want to, or that makes anyone want to do it? Or why is it that we want to kiss a child or a friend on the cheek as a sign of affection, as opposed, say, to just telling them you care about them or appreciate them or love them?

Kissing, embracing, hugging, cuddling, hand-holding – any general "loving" or affectionate physical contact are generally held to be desirable not only for, and not even basically for, the physical feeling alone (though that is often important to some extent) but for some sort of emotional enjoyment or satisfaction or something else as well. If the physical feeling were the important thing, we would want to have physical contact with everybody who had good hugging, kissing, hand-holding, etc. techniques, and people with the right kind of grip, lip texture, hand size and whatever else would go into the physical comfort of such things. We would seek the best kissers or the best huggers, etc. Or we would just as soon cuddle up with the right feeling kind of plastic or the correctly shaped hot water bottle or pillow. But these are not necessarily the people or things we want to cuddle up with, kiss, etc. So the physical aspect of touch alone, or even in large part, must not be what we are after, at least not generally. Or take 'the Hollywood hug' where people hug each other basically only at the shoulders, with the rest of their bodies as far apart as possible in that position. I am uncomfortable with any kind of frontal hug, even a 'Hollywood' one with anyone I don't feel romantically inclined toward. I can hug someone from the side or put my arm around their back, standing beside them, but I don't feel inclined to be chest to chest with someone I don't have romantic feelings for. A 'frontal' hug to me is a romantic sort of thing, not a friendship sort of thing. But the question here is why a (physical)

hug or embrace of either sort gives, or serves as a form of, emotional affection.

Of course, not all sexual activity, particularly with regard to orgasm or attempts to achieve it require any sort of emotional element. Masturbation and some intercourse (for example, some cases of sex with a prostitute, sex by a prostitute, sex for the sake of conquest or just physical fun) may be just for the physical release of tension (or for money) and for the accompanying good feeling or whatever non-emotional, psychological feeling might follow. And there can be touching that feels good without any sort of emotional attachment. Some people, for example, like having their hair washed at the salon or I used to love having the warm lather put on the back of my neck at the barber's (when they used to shave the back of your neck with a razor) and enjoyed having it cleaned off with the warm, slightly damp towel, even though I had no particular affection for the barber. Many people enjoy a good massage by a professional or perhaps even a friend whom they have no romantic interest in. But for me, like with a hug, I would be uncomfortable with a massage like that. I can give a massage like that, but do not want to receive one. I consider a massage, like a hug, to be an intimate kind of thing, though I don't know what makes it seem or be that way to me.

But as already stated, most people (or at least most civilized people) find that mere physical pleasure is not what they generally seek in seeking affectionate physical contact with another. They seek some sort of emotional closeness also, or in particular. A person masturbating probably is mainly or solely interested in the physical aspect, and as one of my students mentioned in a class, the plastic doll (as well as numerous other articles and devices) on the market for that probably would be satisfactory if they felt good. But they would hardly do for making love. To find out the person you are enjoyably making out with is only plastic or totally "bionic" or is an android I think would stop most people's making out with that "partner".

So then (except in cases for the release of tension, the creation of

babies, or the sheer physical pleasure of sexual play) it seems that an (or the) essential aspect of physical or sexual contact is some emotional or mental satisfaction. Further, except for masturbation, prostitution, just physical pleasure, etc., it is essential that the other person enjoy it too; otherwise it would be like kissing the wall or cardboard.

Now comes the problem:

Physical contact is important, and important for something which it gives you, but something which is not itself physical. Why is it great to kiss (or otherwise be physically affectionate or intimate with) someone you love or desire, but not someone you do not, even if they physically feel the same or if the person you do not love or desire feels even better. How can this be so; or why should it be so? (And it certainly does seem so.) What can you get out of physical contact that is itself not physical?

Further, suppose there was something that was not physical that could be received from physical contact of a certain sort. For example, suppose that when you hold and kiss a particular person, you get a very warm emotional feeling, a feeling that you do not get except when you are holding and kissing that person. Now, all there is in contact with you is their body – not their mind, unless you want to argue, as I do not, that there is some kind of mental contact or ESP when bodies are in certain juxtapositions – so the warm emotional feeling you get must depend entirely or in part on the physical feeling of their body against yours. But it seems to me that it cannot be entirely, for surely, we could pinpoint all the physical aspects of the way they feel against us – we could measure their body temperature, pressure, texture, etc. and we could then construct an inanimate object (or we could find someone else) that could feel, physically, to you exactly the same when you hold or kiss it (or him or her). If it were the physical contact alone with the person which gave you the emotional warmth, anything that feels exactly like that should give you the exact same emotional warmth. But it won't. Why not? What is it that the physical contact

gives that causes emotional warmth yet that is not given by the physical contact itself? Or how can some physical contact cause something that other exactly similar physical contact cannot cause? Is the physical contact really the transmitter or the important factor that it seems?

And it seems to be the important or essential element because no matter how good someone makes you feel in any other way (for example, through a good, intimate, open talk, or a walk together through the snow on a clear and starry night, or a rousing discussion where each of you, because of the other, reaches new mental heights you never realized yourselves capable of) the emotional feeling is not the same emotional feeling you get from kissing or cuddling.

But as argued above, it cannot be physical contact alone which gives the emotional feeling. So it seems then that there is something along with physical contact that is the important thing in causing the emotional factor. But what? ESP or some sort of mental joining seem to be rather speculative, ad hoc answers; and it would seem funny that they should only occur when you kiss somebody you like, not just anybody you might kiss, or that they should only happen when kissing, etc. instead of when whispering close together, standing together in a crowded elevator, having the dentist or hygienist examine your teeth, or when giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Scenario 3: Envision you are having intimate physical contact with another person. Physical contact is important, and in many cases important for something which it gives you, but something which is not itself physical. Why is it great to kiss (or otherwise be physically affectionate or intimate with) someone you

love or desire, but not someone you do not, even if they physically feel the same or if the person you do not love or desire feels even better. How can this be so; or why should it be so? (And it certainly does seem so.) What can you get out of physical contact that is itself not physical?

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Further, it cannot be the other person's enjoyment of the kiss that is so important (though it is generally important we believe they enjoy the kiss for us to continue enjoying the kiss) here, since the question is why does either of you enjoy it in the first place. And it cannot be that you enjoy it because he or she enjoys it and he or she enjoys it because you enjoy it; that would give no starting place; you could not enjoy it till he or she did and he or she could not till you did. Further, if what made kissing so great were that the other person enjoyed it, along with some sort of physical feeling, you should enjoy kissing anyone who enjoyed kissing you and who kissed with the proper technique, pressure, etc.; but you do not.

And it cannot be just the fact that the other person "accepts" you and is willing to or wanting to kiss you, for (1) the above circularity problem arises again – you want to kiss them because they want to kiss you; they want to kiss you because you want to kiss them; yet neither of you can want to till the other does, (2) there are probably many people you know who could or would accept you or want to kiss you, some of whom it might physically feel good to kiss and who perhaps even would enjoy kissing you; yet still you do not necessarily want to kiss them, and (3) actual kissing would not then be important – only knowing the other person wants to kiss you or is willing to kiss you. This, though, is not the case. Giving truth serum or a lie detector examination to find out someone wants to kiss you, or just seeing it in their manner and their eyes, or knowing that a prostitute or a lonely or horny person would kiss you isn't exactly an emotionally thrilling thing. And I do not suspect a person married a short time has any doubt that their spouse will want physical affection from them (generally) – yet that knowledge does not feel anywhere near the same as does the actual physical embracing, kissing, etc. itself.

What it is about, or along with, physical contact that causes it to be so desirable and/or emotionally or mentally satisfying with (only) certain people at certain times, I do not know. Definitely something, though.

Key Takeaways

- Love and sexual desire (or love and lust) are not necessarily the same and do not necessarily coincide.
- Sexual attraction is not a prerequisite for love.
- Sex is not necessarily the most important element in love, though it may be important at a particular

time to particular people.

- Emotional and physical aspects of sex do not necessarily coincide.

Key Terms

- ***Sex*** in the context of this book may refer not just to intercourse, but to any sort of physical contact usually associated with physical/emotional desire: passionate or romantic kissing, holding hands, hugging. In specific contexts it may be about intercourse or at least genital manipulation/contact of various kinds.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What element of relationships is considered by some people to be merely animalistic and beneath the dignity of human beings?
- ***Question***: Why before the advent of birth control pills did families that had air conditioning in their homes tend to conceive more children in the summer than those without?

Chapter 13 A Kiss Is Just a Kiss — The Impossibility of Sexual Communication

Chapter 13 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Recognize that the conventional view that sex as a form of communication is false and misleading.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn more about sexual communication in relationships.

"The Impossibility of Sexual Communication" does not mean communication about sex or about feelings is impossible; and I will address that at the end. I am simply claiming at the beginning that ***communication*** by means of sex is impossible.

Regardless of almost all the most recent popular beliefs and articles1 on the topic, sex (or any touching) is not a form of communication! It does not communicate love, care, concern, tender feelings, or anything. (One can imagine a Bert Reynolds or Richard Pryor movie scene where either of them meets some beautiful, but insecure, woman who very soon asks him to show her he cares about her – by making love to her. Surely Reynolds or Pryor would be able to give the camera one of their most devilish, gleaming smirks. I would claim that the absurdity of the request *as a demonstration* of caring or love is not diminished by occurring instead on the third or eighth date or on a wedding night or thereafter.) Neither is bad sex or no sex a communication of lack of love, lack of concern, lack of tender feelings, or whatever. Sex is not

an expression of anything, let alone of love. Further, I think it is risky and potentially harmful to believe that it is.

How one touches another is probably a matter of both inborn and early personality and early learning that continues to develop to some extent through one's lifetime. How you are touched as a child and how your parents teach you to touch pets and other people will probably have a great deal of bearing on how you touch others, both sexually and non-sexually as an adult. In regard specifically to sex, what you learn about style or technique and in some cases even your goals, point of view, or intentions for sex will depend a lot on what you read and hear and on what your partner(s) teaches you – perhaps in direct verbal teaching, but possibly even more so by response to your efforts. If one has the proper curiosity, if one has the proper sensitivity to different ways of touching and being touched, caressed, and massaged, if one has the proper attitude of at least wanting to please the other person, and the sensitivity or sense to look for clues to their response, if one learns by being with someone who is demonstrably (and therefore educationally) responsive and positively reinforcing to your touching them in pleasing ways, then one is likely to learn more pleasing "technique" – that is, personal style. With the wrong inborn personality, bad early training, lack of knowledge, and/or not particularly instructive or responsive partner(s), one's natural touch is not likely to be or appear particularly loving, regardless of how one feels about their partner or what one intends. And various combinations of inborn and developed personality and training will help cause someone to be that much "better" or "worse" a lover, along with whatever their feelings or intentions are at any given time with any given partner. It is not just your feelings or intentions alone that determine what sort of lover you are or what sort of touch you have.

This is not to say there is a standard set of directions for how to make love to every person or to any given person each time. Different people like different things; some people like different things at different times. But also, different people learn different

things and have different instincts about touching. Some people will be more gentle, others more rough; some more responsive to their partner's needs than others; some more responding to their partner's actions, some more communicative or demonstrative about what they enjoy; some will be more open to change; others, more desirous of certain patterns; some will have a lighter touch, others will be more forcefully massaging, others able to vary their touch; some will be clumsy and fumbling, others very smooth; some will be comfortable and comforting. And this is apart from what they are thinking and how they feel about their partner.

Whatever one's ability to please or displease one's partner probably says too little in general to signal communication either of love or of the lack of it. Selfish playboy seducers or selfish playgirl seductresses —with only the moment and their own desires on their minds may have little love for their partner, but their actions might be quite gentle and stimulating. And on the other hand, there are certainly plenty of people who love others but who have little idea of how to please their loved one sexually, and who therefore may appear in bed either to be rough, unloving, insensitive, or stupid, though none of those may be the case.

A tender kiss is not necessarily a sign of tender feelings. It may be just the way, for whatever reason, that person kisses. Some people kiss better than others. They might be able to send a shiver down the spine of almost anyone they kiss; more people who kiss them might enjoy it better. At a charity kissing booth they might make lots more money than anyone else. But that is not a sign in any way that they are feeling particularly loving toward, or in love with, whom they kiss. And it does not mean that in general they are more loving than anyone who does not kiss as well. Kissing and touching are arts. They depend on knowledge, sensitivity to the moment and to one's own and the other person's textures and pressures, positioning, timing, etc.

How one touches, kisses, manipulates, or has intercourse is not necessarily any sort of sign of any inner feeling. It is simply a sign

of how that person makes love to you at that moment, given the way you kiss, play with, caress, respond to, and have intercourse with him or her. And since there is no guarantee or even a social convention that kissing, touching, or making love in a certain way is a sign of loving feelings, it does not have to be. A person might kiss you (in a certain way) for any number of reasons. The reason they have might not be that they are intending to tell you they love you. You're taking it that way would be your misunderstanding, not their lying or even (intentionally) deceiving you. Someone might kiss you out of gratitude, lust, loneliness, friendly affection, simple fondness, pity, experimentation, a test of how you will react, to say good night, because they think you expect or want them to, or whatever.

Taking tender (or however), pleasant, "loving" gestures as a sign of loving feelings and being correct about it is still not understanding a communication. Communications are messages a communicator tries to send, not just anything someone thinks they perceive is being said or sent, even if the content, of what they infer or mistakenly think is being said, is true. Even reading body language or signs correctly is not being communicated to; it is being a detective or sensitive student of human nature. When you are right it is because you are perceptive, not because the other person has (intentionally) told you anything; and when you are wrong, it is because you made an error, not because they made an error or lied to you. If someone tries to hide pain from you, for example, but you can tell anyway that they are in pain, it is not because they have told you about their pain, but because you were perceptive enough to discover it for yourself. Communication involves some sort of intention, by the teller, to convey a meaning in some sort of conventional manner. Communication involves both an intention (to make something known) and convention (as a means of expressing it). Any action can be a sign of things – babies can signify pain by crying – but such non-conventional signs can often signify almost anything (in the baby's case, hunger, thirst, pain, over tiredness, gas, wet diapers, being too hot or too cold, loneliness, boredom…),

and therefore they are not communication in the normal sense. The meteorologist can forecast the weather from certain signs, but that is not because nature is communicating with him. A baseball batter may guess what pitch a pitcher with bad telegraphing habits is about to pitch to him, but the pitcher is certainly not trying to tell, nor in the normal sense telling, the batter what pitch he is going to throw as if they had met beforehand and fixed the game. One cannot tell whether his or her partner has cooked one's favorite meal because he or she has wrecked the car or has some other bad news, has no other food in the house, wants that meal themself, has good news, is feeling loving, or just thought it was time to have it again. Actions like those can be a sign of anything or nothing and therefore are not a communication at all.

A person who would rely only on such non-conventional signs is very likely to end up in trouble. For example, a person who assumes his spouse no longer loves him because she no longer often kisses him might not find out until he has made damaging accusations (or actions) that something outside the relationship is simply troubling her or that she does not feel well. Likewise, a girl who thinks she is loved because she is kissed or gently touched or made love to in a nice way may be quite drastically mistaken. There are an abundant number of short stories and television and movie plots where mistaken or misinterpreted "communications" cause harm. Many of these are simply reflections of the kinds of mistakes that occur in real life.

One more argument that "loving" body language is not communication is the following one: Consider the baseball pitcher who telegraphs his pitches. Suppose he, either purposely or unintentionally, telegraphs the pitch that he does not throw. Say, he telegraphs fast ball but throws the slider. If the batter has read the telegraphed signal and sets for the wrong pitch and strikes out, he may have been fooled or deceived, or he may have deceived himself – but he was not lied to. He could have no grounds and would appear crazy or a fool, to claim to the press later that he had struck out because the pitcher had lied to him about what he was going to

throw. But if reading such signals is communication, he would have been lied to if the pitcher had intentionally telegraphed the wrong pitch. But even in reality, if a pitcher intentionally telegraphs a wrong pitch to a batter, the pitcher is only trying to trick or deceive the batter, not lie to him. (All lies may be tricks or deceptions, but not all tricks or deceptions are lies.) Hence, reading such signals or making them is not communicating.

Regarding "loving" body language: if a person tells someone he loves them when he knows he does not, this is lying. But kissing a person one does not love (such as out of sympathy or pity, as a very polite way of saying good night, just out of lust or loneliness or appreciation, or simple fondness) is not lying, nor is it even necessarily deceiving them. In this day and age of so much casual sex, one who reads love into every kiss might even be guilty of self-deception. Now it would be self-contradictory to tell someone you love them but you do not love them.

But there is no contradiction in tenderly kissing someone and then telling them you do not love them and you want them to understand you did it because you just wanted to kiss them, because you feel affection but not love for them, because you were drunk, because you felt lustful, because you meant it as a good night gesture, or because you just wanted to be friends. Since this would not be a contradiction, a kiss cannot *mean* love.

It seems to me that it is terribly important that people understand what sex means both to themself and to the other person, preferably before engaging in it, if they want to have a better chance of avoiding harmful misunderstandings. And the best way to find out what it means to each other is to *discuss* it in *words*. Then you are actually communicating what sex means to you – how you feel about it, why you want to have it, why you think it is right to have it with that person now, how you think you are likely to respond tomorrow to having it today, how you feel about the person, what you expect, want, or think about the relationship, etc. Such a discussion might give a better understanding than guessing

about body language, particularly guessing in the dark. Sexual intimacy for most people, even in this day and age, is still a very important kind of experience, and it can be devastating if one later finds out it did not have the kind of meaning or importance for the other person that it did for you and that you thought it had and wanted it to have for him or her.

When I taught classes and discussed love as a philosophy topic, I often said that I thought there was nothing wrong in asking someone after a kiss why they kissed you, particularly the first time or on a first date. Two students in the past have objected to the idea. One, a former sailor said, "hell, you don't need to ask and spoil the mood. When you came off the ship in a port and all those girls were standing around saying 'hey, sailor, you want to have a good time?' you knew there was no love involved on either side. The only point is you are also trying not to get money involved either, though that is what she wants." Maybe so, but such a case is hardly the normal circumstances for a first kiss, caress, or passion with someone you are going out with; I had not exactly been (nor am I now) talking about dates between sailors and wharf- walkers. The other student said that asking for the reason for a kiss even on a date would spoil the mood, ruin the romance, be embarrassing, and cost you any further kisses, sex, or loving responses. I replied that happened sometimes but was rarer than the times it helped you gain an understanding of each other and made it even more desirable and nice. He just shook his head and said he could not imagine his ever asking anything like that at such a time. Then it happened to him. He came into class one day and said a girl he went out with over the weekend kissed him and asked him why he had kissed her, what it had meant to him. I and the rest of the class were very interested in his reply and what happened. But he said he was so flabbergasted by the fact she had asked him that the only thing he could think to say was to ask whether she had taken my course. She hadn't. (Had never kissed me either.)

At any rate, kissing or holding hands or even more intimate sex can

be for any number of motives and can mean almost anything. If you care about why a person wants to hold your hand or kiss you or go to bed with you, you might be better off asking them. And hopefully, they will not lie to you. But whether they do or not, at least you will not be deceiving yourself into thinking it has a meaning that is in no way intended. And you will avoid any accidental misunderstandings. There may not be anything wrong with two particular, mature people making love with each other with both knowing they are doing so simply because they want to and have had a nice time together and are in the mood and that it portends nothing in terms of commitment for either in the future (assuming also there is nothing else in their circumstances, such as one of them having venereal disease or being married to someone who does not deserve being cheated on, etc., that would make the act wrong). But there is something wrong (all other things being equal) with it when one thinks it means much more to the other than it actually does. And it may be easily prevented if they discuss the matter ahead of time, particularly if both are honest.

Of course, a perceptive person takes more than the other person's word into account, since perhaps they are lying or perhaps (and this can be quite likely with less experienced people) deceiving themselves about what it means to them. A naive, innocent young person may be more vulnerable to, and later hurt by, being loved and left than they honestly think they will be. Discussion is still better than no discussion; at least it can help prevent unintentional misunderstanding, and it may help uncover deception or self-deception before (more) harm is done.

Sometimes people think sex is the only way they can show concern or loving feelings, but this is false. You can always tell someone you love them and how you feel about them, even in difficult or complicated cases. At the very least, even if you are not good at describing your feelings, you could describe to them how you would like to act, rather than acting that way without talking. Saying you would like to kiss or cuddle or make love to someone tells as much (or more) than does trying to kiss them, hug them,

or actually kissing them or hugging them. Suppose you have certain desires for another, but desires you feel would best not be acted upon or fulfilled. It seems to me that rather than simply stifling or ignoring such desires and saying nothing to the other person, one might, at an appropriate time, simply verbally express the desire by saying something like: "gee, I really would like to (go to the dance with you, kiss you, play tennis with you, discuss politics with you, make love to you, etc.) but I don't think I ought to (or cannot now) because …." This way the other person can at least know that you care about them in certain ways. Sometimes that is important. They may thank you for your comments or say they feel the same way, or they may disagree about the correctness of abstinence. They may even say that they do not feel the same way, at least not at this time. They could also, if they are not nice or understanding, get angry or hostile, but this probably will not usually happen; if it did, it might show you they were not "made in heaven" for you anyway.

Of course, talking is not necessarily romantic even if you are telling someone how much you love them (especially if you do not say it very well), but romance is not always (or perhaps ever) communication. The two are different and may be appropriate at different times. Sometimes, it is more appropriate to communicate, and sometimes it is more important to be romantic, to touch, and/or to be passionate. The point is not to confuse romance, touching, or passion with communication.

There have been a number of girls I have loved in the sense of having passionate, romantic attractions toward, and with whom I got along very well and satisfyingly in many ways, but with whom sexual activity of varying degree would have been a bad idea for various reasons, even though desired. It was often very important to talk about this with them or at least to talk around the subject in such a way as to make each others' feelings and intentions known. This often added much to the relationship. If you love someone or miss someone or want someone, but know having them would not be for the best for each other, there is nothing wrong, and there

can be something beautiful, in telling them that, rather than in just ignoring the desires or pretending to the other that those desires are non-existent.

One of my closest and fondest loves was a girl who was already engaged to someone when I met her. We never kissed. But we spent hours talking and walking. We knew how we felt about each other because of the things we said to each other. That knowledge enriched our relationship and our lives. We probably would have married each other, had she not already been committed to another, whom she also loved; and he and she were very good for each other. Our relationship took nothing away from their commitment and their relationship. Her other love and marriage to him took nothing away from our friendship or our feelings for each other.

Some of the closest people are those who have grown old loving each other but behaving simply as loving friends because they were committed (at least to be faithful sexually) to others or because sexual activity of whatever sort might not have been right for some other reason. Still, they could communicate (verbally – by telling or writing) to each other their feelings without trying to do it by making a pass, kissing, or having any degree of sex. Just as sex is not a form of communication about feelings and concerns, words about those feelings and concerns can be a communication without sex. And it can be an important and enriching communication.

One example is Stephen Thayer's "Close Encounters": "...touch is the most powerful of all the communication channels – and the most carefully guarded and regulated" (Thayer, 1988). Thayer then goes on to point out five categories of touching: functional-professional (where "touch must be devoid of personal messages"), social- polite (e.g., handshake), friendship- warmth, love-intimacy, sexual-arousal. However, I believe it is not the kind of touch that communicates or carries a message, but the social, verbal, and/or logical aspects of the circumstances in which the touch occurs. A woman patient of a male gynecologist, during a breast examination, for example, would, of course generally be upset and draw back if the doctor, while touching her, said "You know I find you very

exciting." But it would be just as shocking and upsetting if he said it before he touched her. It is not the manner of his touch, but the inappropriateness of his remarks and the uncertainty of what his actions and intentions will be in that kind of vulnerable situation that is upsetting. Or suppose after a normal, professional breast examination, a doctor thinks he may have missed or ignored something. The appropriate action would be to schedule another appointment, not to mention it to the woman at a party they both happen to attend and suggest she let him check her breasts again in a back bedroom. Not because his touch might be any different but because the circumstances or social/emotional "logic" of the situation is meaningful. Or consider a neck massage; it could be given by a professional masseuse, a physical therapist, a nurse, a fellow co-worker (or even a stranger) who sees someone in obvious discomfort huddled over a computer, a lover, one's mother, or whatever. The massage itself may be indistinguishable whether given by one person or by another; it is the circumstances in which it is given, and the understood relationship between the people, that contributes to the emotional "feeling", or non-feeling accompanying the massage. A husband might give a purely chiropractic neck massage to his wife in a crowded office or after they have had all the sex either wants. Yet his touch (of her neck) may be the same as when he hopes to sexually arouse her. And the way she responds to the massage will have to do with the context in which it occurs, and with how she feels at the time. Even in the bedroom, if she is angry with him about something, or feeling particularly dispassionate, she may not even be relaxed by his neck massage, let alone aroused. It is not the way someone touches you that means anything in the way communication does; it is the appropriateness of touch in the context of a given situation and in the context of the relationship (at that moment) between the touchers that is important. Even being hit by someone does not, by itself without a context or an accompanying verbal message, tell you why they hit you or what it means. They could even have mistaken you for someone else or assumed incorrectly that you did something terrible.

Of course, touch can be meaningful in a given context; but it is meaningful in the sense of "significant" or "important" or just "highly irregular or unusual", or "terribly inappropriate", not in the sense of conveying any specific message. If a stranger were to try to feel a woman's breasts for lumps or if her doctor were to caress her breasts rather than medically examine them, it would be meaningful in the former sense, not the latter. If she says "What is the meaning of this!" or "What are you doing!", she is expressing indignation or moral outrage at what he is doing, not at how he is doing it. And she is certainly not simply asking a literal question. But such a sense or use of meaning is not peculiar to touching. If a teacher were to be intentionally teaching French in the class he is supposed to be teaching geometry, that would be meaningful and questionable in the same way. Similarly if his students were having a food fight in the classroom or if you caught someone telling your child lies about you or if a reporter turned in to his editor a story written backwards.

Touch can also be beneficial, right, reassuring, or otherwise appropriate – it can be meaningful in a good way. Thayer's article points out a number of such possible situations. But whether touch is right or beneficial or not depends on the circumstances and the consequences. It depends on a number of factors, but communication – what the touch means, which by itself is nothing – is not one of them. (Return to text.)

Key Takeaways

- Since sex is neither necessary nor sufficient for love, sex cannot communicate love. Insofar as one thinks that sex is a sign of love, one is inferring it, and might be right or wrong. Incorrect inferences are not

miscommunications nor signs of lies.

- There is nothing inconsistent about having sex with someone and telling him or her you are not in love with them. Although disappointing, it is not a sign of lying nor necessarily even a sign of deceit.
- While some people may never be willing to have sex with someone they do not love, that is not guaranteed, and at best shows that sex for them implies they love their partner, but it is not the same as a communicated pronouncement or declaration of love.

Key Terms

- ***Communication*** involves a conventional mutually understood (even if imperfectly on various occasions) means of trying to convey ideas or information from one person to another, through some kind of language or symbolism or gestures that have common meaning. Communication is a complex concept, which distinguishes it from sex.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What about kissing and touching are arts?
- ***Question***: Why is communication by means of sex impossible? What are the reasons sex is not a form of communication?

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Chapter 14 Being Loved For Yourself

Chapter 14 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Provide example(s) of the various meanings or criteria that might be meant by being 'loved for oneself'.

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When you are old and grey and full of sleep And nodding by the fire, take down this book, And slowly read, and dream of the soft look

Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep; How many loved your moments of glad grace, And loved your beauty with love false or true, But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,

And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

– from "When You Are Old" by W. B. Yeats (1893)

Often the lament is heard that one does not feel loved for herself or for himself, but instead is loved or liked for some characteristic or set of characteristics he or she has – wealth, beauty, personality,

physical attributes, job, social prestige, special skill, or whatever. It is easy to see why the lament may be justified with regard to such often superficial or impersonal things as wealth, prestige, or job (when the job is only a means to earn a living, not a reflection of genuine personal interest or inner self; jobs are not impersonal if, for example, it is work a person is particularly suited to and interested in and if perhaps it is work he or she would want to do it even if not paid for it).

A person who loves someone because of those qualities would seem to love anyone who had them, and not the present loved one if he or she did not have them, regardless of any (other) personal qualities. This is also true, though perhaps to a lesser extent (depending on how much is nature or luck and how much is cultivated through hard work) with regard to looks or physical characteristics. Certainly there is not terribly much to the relationship if it would deteriorate on the basis of one's aging or gaining a small amount of weight or if it would deteriorate even because of disfiguring surgery or accident. And it seems to me that a woman whose mate would leave her or love her less over something even such as a radical mastectomy has a mate or a relationship with some serious flaws anyway. A young man or woman who cultivates their beauty or athleticism (at the expense of more important and more permanent qualities) might beware of marrying someone who likes them primarily for that, since when their youth, beauty, or athletic skills desert them, so might their shallow companion.

Obesity through gluttony or total unconcern for appearance might cause a legitimate strain on an otherwise good relationship because such a cause gets more into character and personality than just physical appearance. Certainly obesity due to some unavoidable medical problem should not seriously harm a relationship that has more than (superficial) attraction – or more than infatuation.

When the lament is because one feels loved for one's personality, skills, or particular actions – things that seem closer to "self" – it is not always clear how justified the lament is or whether it really means what it seems to mean on the surface. It would seem odd to

want to be loved, enjoyed, and appreciated for something other than one's actions, looks, character, personality, and mind, etc. What else would there be? Is there a "self" that can be loved apart from these traits?

And doesn't one have to "earn" love in some way anyway, or is it supposed to be totally unconditional? (Though if it is totally unconditional, how is it then personal?) Is someone asking to be loved even if they were (a) totally different (person) also? What point would there be in that? Certainly it would be odd for someone to feel about a car that they liked it only because of its shape, size, mileage, maneuverability, durability, price, performance and comfort but not really for itself. What would its "self" be apart from all these things, or what is wrong with liking it for those things – those are the things that one's appreciation for cars should be based on, it seems.

Yet even with a car, one can form a sufficient sentimental attachment to it so that one would hate to get rid of his old car even though it no longer provides the kind of service one needs or the performance one wants in a car and even though its looks may be severely run down. Hence, it seems there might be something to liking or loving one's car even though there is little or nothing specifically about the car one loves or can love anymore. Part of this could be because of what the car has done in the past, the good times it has provided for its owner or the good times it has taken him to or helped him share with other people. It provides a link to the past and helps conjure up some pleasant memories perhaps. Also, the owner may simply feel comfortable with the car in certain ways.

With people, I think a number of things can be meant, some similar to the example of the car, in talking about being liked for ones' self. Some of these are fair to ask for or want in a relationship; some are unfair to seek or require.

First, since there is a difference between enjoyment and attraction, it is fair, I believe, for one to expect another in a

supposed love relationship to be attracted to him or her, to care for him or her in a loving way, independent of the particular enjoyments the lover receives from the loved one's attributes or particular qualities. However, on my analysis of what love is, for that attraction to be one of love (and not just infatuation), one does have to do something(s) that the attracted person enjoys and one does have to do things that are good for them – not all the time, of course, but generally. You must do these things, not (just) to keep the other attracted, but to keep that attraction one of love and not just one of blind infatuation. Hence, you cannot just, in general, do nothing or do bad or dissatisfying things for the other person.

However, people do get old, people do have accidents or surgery, people do change and are changed through time and living. People have moods and/or act differently under different conditions and situations. It seems to me that if a relationship is, or has been overall very good and very loving, one should not have to worry about being unloved when one is older and looks differently; one should not have to worry about being unloved because sometimes one is depressed, ill, pre-occupied, busy, tired, in a quiet, private, reflective mood, just wants to be alone or because one cannot provide a type of enjoyment or match one's usual bubbly mood or intellectually stimulating manner, or whatever. Sometimes some people do not want to have to "perform" in some particular manner in order to be liked. Certainly one should not, if the relationship is a good and loving one, have to worry that their being, say, ill might cause love for them to wane or die, just because lying wretchedly ill in bed through no fault of their own they cannot be their usual, provocative, witty, entertaining, benevolent self.

Further, over time there is the kind of feeling one might have for a loved one that is like something of the sort one has for the car because of what they have been through together; because of what they have shared together (only with a person of course in a much more mutual, active, important, personal, and meaningful way), regardless of what they may ever be able to share together again. A relationship should not, it seems to me, depend just on

"what one has done for the other lately," or will continue to do, but there should be some love and appreciation for what the other person has done and meant in the past. Certainly one could reasonably expect, I would hope, to be loved or cared about as much as a car can be loved and cared about after the same period of time. This is especially true, if no controllable qualities arise that would justifiably alienate the lover. If A turns out to voluntarily have destructive qualities that are difficult for B to cope with, it is possible, though not necessary, those qualities might justifiably cause B to cease caring for A in a very loving way. And in some cases they ought to; or even if they do not cause attraction to die, they might justify no longer calling the relationship or that attraction one of love. I will discuss this further in the chapters on commitment and on ethics. Here let me just say there should be in a good or loving relationship both attraction and, after a period of time, a kind of nostalgic affection for each other as well, independent of (given the following qualification) any particular attributes or qualities that are pleasing or gratifying.

The qualification is that attraction should be independent of good qualities and joys but not in spite of the other's controllable bad and/or dissatisfying characteristics. It would be unfair for a person to expect attraction, care, or concern (though this might still happen) if they, voluntarily, seldom or never did anything that was satisfying, and especially if they continually voluntarily did things or had characteristics that were dissatisfying, hurtful, or otherwise bad for the other.

Such an attraction, if it existed, would not, on my analysis, be love anyway, but infatuation or some sort of unjustified, masochistic attraction. An unhappy person who is unhappy through no particular fault of their own (one whose life has some rain in it but not because they have gone about seeding clouds) can be found attractive, loved and cared about; a mean or bitter person might not be. An incapacitated person can be loved; but a lazy person – continually doing little for himself or the other, might not very long

expect attraction for (or the relationship with) him to continue. One might even love a grouch, or even a sometimes vicious person – if there are sufficient times where the other has redeeming social characteristics. One might become and remain attracted to them even if they do not have such redeeming features, but this is hardly to be expected and impossible to be reasonably demanded.

Nor would this attraction be love. The attraction and ethically humanitarian concern part of love may be unconditional, but not the total part; getting along with someone, living with someone, or putting up with someone are not unconditional; some satisfactory and good behavior at least is to be expected.

Another sense of "being loved for oneself": a person may not mean that they want to be loved apart from or in spite of any of their characteristics or actions, but that they want to be loved and appreciated for particular characteristics or behavior that they feel most represent them. Sometimes one has some characteristics (whether acquired naturally, accidentally, or by one's own effort) that are especially important to him, whether reasonably so or not. The person may want to be recognized, appreciated, noticed, or liked for these characteristics; and this might be what they mean by being loved for themselves. It may be something as general as beauty or intelligence or as specific as a new way of tying a tie. I spent weeks one time in adolescence trying to cultivate a certain type of smile (after David Jansen – a smile mostly in the eyes, not bubbly or animated, but kindly, with that brief upturn of the corner of the mouth, sometimes one corner, sometimes both) since it seemed to be the kind of smile that reflected moods I often felt. Hence, I was happy when the smile was liked by someone or responded to by someone. Of course, this would be a frivolous aspect to base a relationship on, but it is one of the many kinds of things that go into making up a relationship, making it a satisfying one – one person doing something that intrigues the other one and the first liking that this particular thing is found intriguing by the second person. It may also be something that helps attraction grow – she is attracted to him in part for his smile, and he is attracted, in

part, to her for noticing and liking this smile that is mildly important to him. Because different things are important to different people or to one person at different times, it is hard to know ahead of time what might be important to another person – or what they might consider more part of their "self" or nature.

The opposite side of this is having someone particularly enjoy, benefit, or be attracted to you because of (a) trait(s) of yours that you yourself do not consider important or of value. It may even be (a) trait(s) you would like to change or lose. It may be one(s) you do not really care to display (very often). Hence, you may be loved, but feel loved for the wrong reasons – or feel not loved for yourself, not loved for traits that are important to you or that represent you (as you would really like to be).

Another sense of being loved for one's self: a characteristic often desired in a relationship is the desire to be (and, I think, therefore appreciated or valued). This does not mean that one's language is understood, though that is often, of course, important too; but rather refers to something deeper, than that. It means having one's good character, one's intentions or motives, and one's desires and care's or even one's whims (sympathetically) understood or known.

For example, anyone who would have understood me as an adolescent would have known my trying to grow a David Jansen smile was not of serious importance, but only of humorous or stylistic importance to me. One, for example, wants to have his loved ones understand when he is using sarcasm or is trying to make an important point though doing so with humor. One wants to be recognized as tired or ill, not lazy, when one takes some time for rest and is not as industrious as usual. One sometimes wants a loved one to know that when he has said something ignorant or angry or inappropriate that he realizes it and wants to be pitied for being a victim of his faulty mind rather than chastised for being ignorant or evil. Of course decency still requires an apology, but understanding of the perpetrator's character or intent or true meaning, or understanding of the cause of the statement, will allow immediate

acceptance of the apology and forgiveness. Lack of understanding can bring anger that hurts feelings; and it can bring the feeling that because you are not understood, you are therefore also not loved for yourself, since your "self" did not really mean the remark or mean it the way it was taken. Even the best of people are stupid or somehow otherwise out of character sometimes. Friends and loved ones know to ignore it or know how to properly respond to it, knowing it is out of character. They know, for example, that when a usually loving, kind, intelligent person says something that seems stupid or malicious or both, not to immediately berate them for doing so, but to instead calmly or teasingly ask what they meant by that or why they said it, since it seems so out of character for them.

Sometimes wanting to be "understood" means wanting to have others understand, and appreciate your problems and pressures and how well you are doing or trying to do what is right and what is expected of you. Sometimes people want others to know they have been patient or have gone the extra mile or have tried really hard to behave in a certain way or to do something, perhaps especially if it was something they were not very good at, did not like to do, or were really too busy or too tired to do. I once had a man bring his wife's championship show dog to me for an 11×14 portrait, to be a surprise birthday present for his wife. He spirited the dog out of the house, brushed and groomed it in my studio, got the dog back home without his wife's knowing he had taken it away, selected his proof, had the picture matted and framed at a framing shop, brought it back to show me the finished product and just beamed with pride at the successful accomplishment of all his efforts and expense. When he presented the picture to his wife, her only comment was that he had not brushed the dog correctly. He was crushed.

Obviously she had not understood nor appreciated all that he had done, and done just for her, even though it hadn't come out the way it would if she had done it herself. It was not as if she had to show false appreciation for the picture, but she should have shown true

appreciation for his efforts and for his desire to try to please her with something really special.

Even without their trying to do something special, people sometimes want others to appreciate just how difficult just daily living sometimes is for them and how much effort it sometimes takes for them just to do their job and be ordinarily civilized and reasonably pleasant. It is not that they want a medal, but that they want their efforts and their conscientiousness and character (in making those efforts) to be understood and appreciated. If someone works all day at a tiring job, stops at the grocery on the way home, and cooks dinner for the family when they get there, they don't want to be unsympathetically and unappreciatively chastised and criticized for forgetting to pick up dry cleaning or for preparing the same meal they served less than two weeks ago, particularly if no one else who could help lighten the load bothers to help do so, and/or if no one else even realizes or appreciates how much one does and why one therefore cannot always be super-satisfying.

To a person with one kind of lifestyle, a person with another sort of lifestyle may seem to "have it made" – to have an easy life. But the other person may have their own (perceived) difficulties, pressures, and obstacles that requires some personal effort to overcome, and for which they want to be appreciated. Some people are more efficient and more capable than others and can more easily handle obstacles, inconveniences, and petty annoyances; and some people think their world has caved in if they break a nail or the maid is two hours late, or if the flower arrangements are not quite the way they wanted them at a wedding. It may be hard to sympathize with the latter sort of person, but the point is they may unfortunately have the same amount of stress and have to use the same amount of emotional energy and reserve to cope with such minor things as another person would to cope with something really important and objectively more difficult. And they may want to be appreciated for coping with that much stress. The stress is real and the effort required is real, even if the cause of the stress is trivial, unimportant, and unworthy of the amount of stress it provokes in them.

Wanting to be understood can also mean in this regard wanting to have your problems and concerns and desires understood – as when an adolescent wants his parents to show they understand how much something means to him that they seem either to be oblivious to or to make light of or to offer what seem like platitudes to him about a subject. For example, they may want him to date some girl he is not interested in, and they may say embarrassing things to him about it in front of others. Or the child may be embarrassed because his parents seem old- fashioned to him or because they display affection to him in front of his friends whose parents do not do that. A parent may insist on chauffeuring a young teenager on a date instead of letting him or her double date with older teens who drive, but perhaps unsafely.

Children and adolescents, in fact, often have cares and concerns they cannot or do not explain but expect their parents to know about because it is so obvious to the child he or she cannot understand how anybody who supposedly loves them could not know. Sometimes they are right; sometimes parents are oblivious to how important something is to a child even though the child gives all kinds of verbal or nonverbal signals about it that the parents ought to recognize but do not. This sometimes starts in childhood when, for example, a protesting (often, crying) child is forced to wear clothes to school that embarrass him or her, even though there is no particularly good reason they should. A young child who wants to choose their own clothes may pick some really terrible (by adult standards) combination. But it may be very important to him or her; and an understanding parent may allow it, to their own slight embarrassment, if he or she cannot persuade the child to a more suitable choice. A child's, or anyone's, concerns do not have to be objectively reasonable, important, or mature in order to seem reasonable or be of the utmost importance to him or her.

Being understood can also mean having someone know what you want or would like, or how you would like to be treated. A second grader lived in an apartment near me when I was in graduate school;

and for her age, she was a very good reader, seemed to like to read, and seemed fascinated with words and books. For her birthday that year, I bought her a bound book with blank pages for her to keep a journal or to write ideas or stories in or whatever she wanted. It cost about two dollars. Her mother, who had bought her all kinds of more expensive presents, like clothes and toys, etc., later told me that the girl had asked her why she never bought her great presents like the one I had. The people who had bought me the stationery for Christmas one year had understood me in this way.

Being understood can also mean having your deepest feelings and thoughts understood and appreciated – particularly when you express them. The dorm I lived in at college was across the street from a cemetery. One cold, snowy night, when I was particularly lonely, walking on the sidewalk beside the cemetery to go somewhere, death seemed a particularly bleak prospect since there were all those tombstones standing there in the cold and dark and snow, lonely beacons to no one's notice or concern, silently marking the long forgotten graves of people no one remembered or cared about. That was to be everyone's fate, including mine; the walk began on that very melancholy note. But that night as I returned to the dorm, I noticed someone had put fresh flowers near one of the graves. And it seemed to me somehow as if that one small bouquet commemorated all the graves and all the lives of the people who were buried in that old cemetery. This one individual remembrance somehow took on poetic universal significance to me; and in some way these flowers symbolized to me that people cared about those who had gone before them, even those they had not personally known. It was a very uplifting idea, particularly after a melancholy evening, and I was profoundly moved, and at peace with myself and the universe. I wrote about the experience to my parents. My mother's response in her next letter was only to question whether it was safe to walk near a cemetery at night. I felt she hadn't "understood".

Sometimes what a person means by***wanting to be loved*** for themself is that they want to be liked, appreciated, and respected,

for their basic values, principles, ideals, goals, and the things they believe in and the way they behave in general even though they may not be actively pursuing any of those goals or values at a particular time. I think this is a reasonable expectation when one's basic values and principles are good ones, and one conscientiously pursues them. People with ***good "character"*** – something which often requires conscientiousness and some personal sacrifice to earn and to keep – should be appreciated and respected for that character.

But less laudably, some people unfortunately feel understood and perhaps therefore valued or appreciated just by being around others who have the same values, regardless of the merit of those values. For example, some people seem to place higher value on how others appear than on what they think – they put higher value on style than they do on content. If such people are bigots, then to paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., the color of someone's skin might be more important to them than the content of his or her character. If they are simply class snobs, then the clothes on someone's back or the labels on someone's clothes might be more important than the ideas in his or her mind.

Though some values are rationally more important than others, not everyone is rational. Some people hold irrational and unintelligent values. But just being in the company of people with similar irrational values is not to be understood nor justifiably appreciated; it is simply to be in bad company that is like oneself.

Key Takeaways

- Figuring out for oneself what one wants to be loved and appreciated for and what one tends to find most lovable in others one loves or wants to be friends with

or associate with.

Key Terms

- People with ***good "character"*** – something which often requires conscientiousness and some personal sacrifice to earn and to keep – should be appreciated and respected for that character.
- Sometimes what a person means by ***wanting to be loved*** is that they want to be liked, appreciated, and respected, for their basic values, principles, ideals, goals, and the things they believe in and the way they behave in general even though they may not be actively pursuing any of those goals or values at a particular time.

Chapter Review Questions

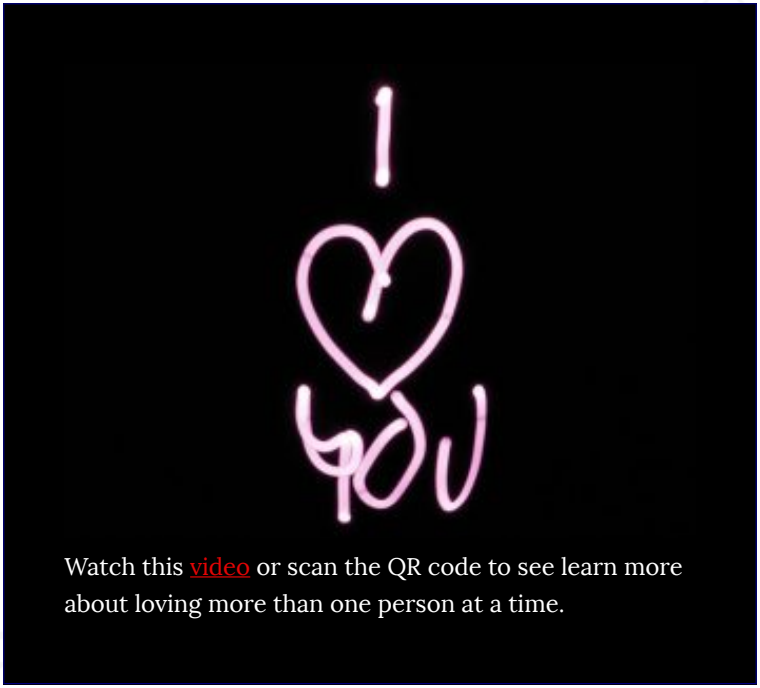
- ***Question***: What are the dangers of focusing solely on beauty or athleticism in a long-term relationship?
- ***Question***: What does 'being understood' in general by someone else mean?

Chapter 15 Loving More Than One Person At the Same Time

Chapter 15 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Compare and contrast the ways loving more than one person at the same time is possible and it what ways it is not.



Watch this video or scan the QR code to see learn more about loving more than one person at a time.

Can a person love more than one person at the same time? “At the same time” seems to be the important qualifier, since there is little question that many people can love more than one person ***romantically*** at different times. We accept without question generally that one can go from a past love to a future love in case the past love relationship ends (divorce, death of a spouse, breaking up of a dating relationship or a youthful romance). Some widows or widowers never seek or find another love because of some sense of devotion to their departed mate, some sense of already achieved completeness that should not be tampered with and possibly tarnished in some way by a relationship that turns out not to be as good, some sense of pointlessness of beginning again with a new partner, or some fear of it. Such people may be incapable of loving more than one person, but most people seem able at different times in their lives to become involved in a new loving relationship when a former one has ended.

Sometimes also one is formed that ends another. The question might be raised whether forming a second romantic love relationship necessarily will cause the first to end; or whether maintaining the first will cause the second to end. Can a person love, romantically, more than one person at a time.

I say romantically (meaning the general sense of romance, whether it is accompanied by excited passion or not) because people obviously can love more than one person at a time in ways other than romantic. People can love both their parents simultaneously; parents can love all their children; people can simultaneously love their parents, their children, and their spouse; one can love one's brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. Of course children often feel they are not loved by their parents as much as their siblings are – and in some cases they are correct – but usually that feeling is erroneous. And people can be fond of, and have concern for, many special friends at the same time.

According to my analysis of relationships and love, I think it is easy to be clear in what sense one can romantically love more than one person at a time, and in what senses one cannot. In terms of the feelings of attraction, one can love more than one person at a time – that is one can be romantically attracted, emotionally attracted, sexually attracted, intellectually attracted and/or whatever to more than one person at the same time. [At least many people can be. Perhaps all could be if they allowed themselves to be; it is not clear to me whether people who are so loyal or so absorbed in their love or feelings for one person are actually incapable of having feelings for someone else or whether they simply do not allow themselves to have such feelings (or ignore or repress them) or whether they just accidentally do not get attracted to others.] Sometimes loving someone very strongly even allows you to have loving feelings toward other people because you feel so good about yourself, everything, and everyone and because you want others to share your joy with you. And sometimes being in love causes you to

joyfully focus so much attention on your loved one that you are unable to think about anyone else, let alone romantically.

However, loving more than one person at a time in terms of participating in a fully loving – including a fully and mutually benevolent, and fully and mutually satisfying – relationship is most difficult, if not impossible. Apart from particular unusual circumstances, one's time and energy are generally too limited to be able to devote that way to more than one person at the same time. Unless you have boundless energy, unless you don't have to work some 40 hours a week, unless you can have your loving relationship with one of the people while you are at work, or unless you can share your relationship with both (or more) lovers at the same time in a threesome (or more), it is practically impossible to have a romantic loving relationship with more than one person at a time. In ordinary daily life there is just not the time to be able to adequately spend in separate full loving relationships (going to movies, having meals together, talking, sharing your thoughts, the day's joys and problems, going to concerts you would like to attend, making love, etc., etc., etc. – all the things that two loving people might want to do together). Even in regard to something as simple as enjoying a movie together, you would often probably want to share the same movie with each lover, and going to the same movies twice (if that is the way you had to do it) would get old and exhausting very quickly.

Feelings, emotions, attractions are not necessarily "***subtractive***" – that is, having some for one person does not take away from some finite amount of them so that you have less available for others. (In fact, in some cases, the more you have for one person, the more you may also have for another; good feelings sometimes generate more good feelings). But time and energy are subtractive; unless you are spending time with both loved ones simultaneously, the more time and energy you spend with one person, the less you will have to spend with the other. This is unless for some reason one's energy is somehow doubled or multiplied by loving more than one person or enjoying more than one person's company, so that one can give up time sleeping or doing other things in order to spend more time

with each love. This is generally not long enduring, even if possible for a while.

If one of one's love's is where one works, then, of course, one might spend sufficient time with them without taking away from time one would have had with another partner anyway.

Or if one is wealthy enough not to have to work (much), one might have sufficient time and energy for two fully loving relationships. Two loved ones do not need, and generally do not want, to spend all their time together, but I suspect that if you work eight hours a day and sleep six to eight hours a day, that normally does not leave time for two or more separate fully loving relationships. Before we had children I musingly thought my wife and I each would have time for each other and about one half a relationship with someone else, since part of the time we spent at home at the same time did not involve doing things together. Children take up that extra time easily enough now.

Notice I have not even discussed problems of time, energy, guilt, deception, or sexual capacity involved in having multiple secret relationships. I have only been dwelling on how difficult or impossible it would be in terms of limited time and energy to have more than one even open fully loving relationship at a time.

I think there is some indication of this too in the nature of sibling rivalries and jealousy in families. Children often get jealous or feel unloved and left out because they feel their parents give too much attention and time to siblings and not enough to them, even when they may actually have as much or more time than their brothers and sisters. They may feel that their parents' enjoyment and satisfying or good behavior with their siblings is more than they receive. They may feel it shows their parents have more affection for the other children. There may be jealousy and hurt feelings. Yet here is an example of open and normal "multiple" loving relationships where the members can even often do things together as a group, so that joys and benefits can be shared at the same time, requiring no repetition of action and energy and no loss of time in going from one

loved one to another. Parents can play a game or go on a picnic or to a movie with their children and spend time with them all together. Yet as any parent can testify, having full relationships just with two children can take up an inordinate amount of time and energy, even when it is exciting and fun, and even when you are not having to do different things with each child at different times. Trying to actively and fully participate in two or more romantic relationships would be equally, or even more, demanding and draining.

Trying to combine marriage (or any relationship) with extra-marital (or "extra-relationship") types of affairs in general perhaps does not work out – not so much because of alienation of affection, though that sometimes occurs, but – because of alienation of enjoyments together, alienation of time spent together or in regard to each loved one (such as in not having time to think about each or time to do and plan things for each), or in alienation of the energy needed to spend time rewardingly with each. Less benefit and less satisfaction, due to lack of time or energy, may lead to less attraction; but even when they do not, their diminishment alone simply makes the relationship less of a good or satisfactory one than it could be. This is also true when the cause that robs time and energy from a relationship is not another person, but something such as a job, perhaps particularly when energy and time are devoted to the job voluntarily, such as by a workaholic. Family members or loved ones often need to have time and energy devoted to them, and a workaholic or unfaithful mate may not have it to devote.

Further, if an extra-relationship affair is a secret one, there can be additional problems that effect time, energy, satisfaction, quality, and feelings. One generally has to exercise caution and deceit, conjure up and remember one's lies, mask one's feelings, and continually worry about one's actions and the consequences of being caught. There is a potential for tremendously draining worry, fear, and guilt in addition to the normal strains of trying to spend time and energy with different people you love. And there may be important times or events to share together that people involved in

a secret affair cannot share – hospitalization of one, milestones of one's children, etc.

But the fact that one probably cannot have a fully loving, fully active relationship with more than one person at the same time, except under some of the kinds of conditions mentioned before, should not prohibit you from having as full and good a relationship as you can with others as time and circumstances permit and warrant. Loving one person should not prevent you from being attracted to or appreciating others or from satisfying and enjoying them in ways that are right. (More about this in the sections on commitment, ethics, and jealousy.) Attraction is a nice feeling, and justified appreciation is a good thing. Because as a child you love your parents and learn from them does not mean you cannot love your teacher and learn at school. Likewise from a neighbor or relative or anyone with whom you might come into contact. Similarly, as an adult, though your marriage or some other kind of committed, primary relationship should and does come first, this does not mean one should not have friends or others one cares about, as long as those relationships do not interfere in ways they should not. One can learn and grow from more than one person, and generally, that is necessary for development and growth. The point is to try to properly balance the time and behavior you owe your mate with what you owe to yourself and others as a socially interacting, learning, growing, teaching, and helping person. And the point is also to recognize and feel comfortable with your feelings for other people, and not need either to act inappropriately on every feeling of attraction for someone else, nor to repress or ignore them – but to act properly in response to them. The feelings themselves do not in any way diminish the feelings you have for, or the relationship you have with, your mate.

Key Takeaways

- Love, in the sense of attraction with a certain amount of value in the relationship is possible with more than one person at a time (for some people), but time and energy do not normally permit full loving relationships with more than one person at a time unless they can be combined in some way or unless there are special circumstances that allow one to divide his/her time in ways not open to most people.

Key Terms

- ***Romantically*** meaning the general sense of romance, whether it is accompanied by excited passion or not.
- Feelings, emotions, attractions are not necessarily ***"subtractive"*** – that is, having some for one person does not take away from some finite amount of them so that you have less available for others.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: Can a person love more than one person at the same time? Why or why not?
- ***Question***: Should Loving one person prevent you from being attracted to or appreciating others?

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Chapter 16 Commitment and Loving More Than One Person

Chapter 16 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Discuss the concept of commitment and the ethical priorities commitments involve and require.

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I have no doubt that most people, if not all, could fall in love with and be loved by any of a number of different people. One is deluding oneself to think his or her spouse is the only person he or she could have been happily married to. Otherwise, it would be miraculous ever to find one's love anywhere among the billions of people on the planet, let alone in the same neighborhood, church, classroom, office, bar, or party. Of course, in some anxious cases it seems difficult to find any sort of even pleasant date let alone ideal mate, but for the most part, one probably meets a number of people throughout one's lifetime to whom one could be satisfactorily or well- married.

Unfortunately, sometimes one finds such other people, and is mutually attracted to them, while one is in another relationship and having some difficulty in it. The temptation then is sometimes to end the first relationship and begin a new one. Almost any relationship where time is spent together, whether it is at work, at college in a roommate situation, or whatever, can develop friction or problems in it, particularly where people are living together

(whether married or not), since living together does not always give the breathing room or time for both preparation for and recuperation from being together that dating or more infrequently meeting gives. There can easily arise the temptation to look for greener pastures and begin anew with someone with whom one does not seem to have any problems. ...Yet.

In terms of love relationships, commitment demands that the "committed to" relationship take precedence over the other, new and potentially loving relationship. If one does not understand or appreciate commitment, one could be continually moving from relationship to relationship without ever making progress beyond certain troubling places.

Commitment or promise does not mean keeping a relationship that is an irreparably bad one; it means trying to work things out in one that has some problems instead of immediately abandoning it. This is easier to do when one realizes all (or almost all) relationships will have some problems, so there is more point to solving the present problem in an already established and growing relationship than in abandoning it for a relationship that will likely also have some sort of problems, and which does not yet have the value, basis or foundation the first has.

In his last movie, Clark Gable has a line where just after his wife or lover has left him, where he is asked by a buddy to go out with him to meet some new girls. His reply is, no thanks, since he doesn't want to have to start from scratch all over again and go through all that. There is something repetitive about most good relationships one person could have (discussing one's past, one's concerns and interests, and one's dreams and hopes, etc); so there is a point to trying to solve new problems with old relationships rather than starting somewhat repetitive new relationships that eventually also run into old problems.

Imagine a businessman starting a new business and abandoning the present one every time his business had some problems. He

would probably not get as far as if he worked out the problems of the already established business.

None of this means one should not cultivate new friendships and loved ones (or new businesses) along with the old or established one(s), but one should just not do it at the expense of the established, primary, or committed to one, since that one has the right to come first and because it (often) has more potential, by virtue of its past, if the problems can be solved than does one that is just beginning. This is in general, of course, depending on the nature and severity of the problem(s).

A ***marriage vow*** is essentially a promise; and promises, just because they are made, bestow an obligation on you to try to keep them; that is the point of them. Marriage vows do not say "love, honor, and cherish till death do us part, forty thousand miles, or the first sign of problems, whichever comes first". If your spouse learns to play bridge and wants to do so, and you do not; or if your spouse leaves the cap off the toothpaste tube, and you do not want it left off, that is hardly grounds for divorce or separation, but perhaps for separate toothpaste tubes or some separate times for each of you to follow the pursuits you are interested in that the other is not.

However, any promise can lose its obligatory force if some conflicting ethical principles are strong enough to override it. This does not mean whim or some weak conflict. If a man were to promise to avenge the death of a friend whom he wrongfully believed murdered, only to later find out that his friend had in fact been the wrongful aggressor and that his killer had acted in self-defense, was innocent, had a family, was a good person, etc., then the promise for vengeance loses its obligatory force and should be broken. Likewise, if you were to promise to meet someone for a date but passed by an auto accident where your help was needed to save a life or prevent further injury, you would be excused from or justified in breaking (your promise to keep) the date. Or a child might promise its mother to obey the baby sitter only to find out that the baby sitter made unfair, harmful, or terrible demands of the

child, who would then have the right, and hopefully the sense and the ability, to break the promise.

Marriage vows, being promises – solemn, and often public promises about a long term relationship – impose an obligation on those taking them, but even marriage vows can be justifiably broken or dissolved under certain circumstances; or put another way, they can lose their bindingness just as any promise can. This should not be over a trivial, petty, or reasonably reparable problem or occurrence; but it should be where the problem is incurable, or where the cure is unfair to one or both, or the harm done so great that it cannot be forgiven, forgotten, or ignored and abided, or the potential bad so great that it should not be condoned or risked.

In a traditional household where the husband works at an outside job and the wife works at keeping the home, rearing the kids, etc., if the man gets sick and stays home for a few days, it is not usually catastrophic; whereas if the woman gets bedridden, the man may not only have to do his outside work, but also see to some or all of the "woman's" tasks as well. Housewives don't get sick pay. This often wreaks havoc for the man unprepared and unhappy to do these things. Hence it has been said that many a fallen woman has been forgiven – but never for falling ill.

Well, a bad virus may be good reason to break a date (a promise to go out with someone), but it is hardly good reason to break a marriage vow – a more substantial promise about a long term commitment. On the other hand, if one is continually subjected to unjust, undeserved physical or mental abuse which can take many forms, from beatings to repeated public or private embarrassment or ridicule, or perhaps even just continued stifling of legitimate personal growth and development regarding deserved opportunities for happiness, then the perpetrating spouse, if there is one partner inexcusably or unjustifiably at fault, has forfeited his right to have the other spouse remain obligated to the marriage vow, obligated to stay married. (Of course, if there is an excuse, such as a brain tumor, for, say, shrewish behavior or wife beating, then

the vow can or perhaps should remain in force, particularly if the problem is reasonably treatable.)

In the past, the general tendency was to keep marriage vows (stay married) and feel obligated to those vows no matter what the cost, the conflict, or the dreadful behavior; in the present, perhaps too many break their vows or give up too soon, seeking divorce, in the face of weak conflicts or problems. Today, too many long term benefits are sacrificed for short-term happiness. In the past often people sacrificed themselves too much for their marriage; the present overreaction to that causes people to sacrifice their marriages too soon for themselves. Too much sacrifice of self often caused the unwitting sacrifice of marriage (by actually further harming the marriage or the family), but too much or too easy sacrifice or dissolution of a marriage often today causes unwitting sacrifice of self (by preventing the joys of solving the problems and further building a relationship that has an already established foundation). Too many people expect too much too soon of a marriage relationship and quit something before they have given it a reasonable chance to succeed. Some have said of marriage that the first fifty years are the hardest. Living together, whether married or not, involves a roommate relationship as well as a loving relationship; and the roommate part of it, as in any kind of roommate situation, can be difficult, particularly if one or both have unreasonably or unrealistically high expectations of the other or the situation.

Marriage also involves a financial partnership (even if there is only one breadwinner), with decisions and disagreements about disbursements of funds. Parenting also gives ample opportunity for marital disagreements and disappointments. Parents have financial, emotional, educational, and companionship obligations to their children which sometimes cause disagreement between parents and which often drain the energy they would have for each other. Rearing children is often a joy but sometimes a burden which takes its personal and relationship psychological toll. Married people also

often have parents and siblings of their own to whom they have family obligations – some of which can also cause strain in a marriage.

Marriage and living together can also thwart needed, and important or desirable, privacy. Some people need more privacy (even from people they love) than others, sometimes just in order to think, regroup, or relax.

Marriage or living together can particularly be a burden to individuals who do not view their partner's personal or career problems or the relationship's marital problems or conflicts as "team" problems whose solution would be a benefit to both and whose sharing lessens the burden for each, but who instead see them as their own undeserved and unearned added personal responsibilities that detract from their individual happiness.

People who want or need to devote almost all of their time and energy to their own individual goals – whether it is simply having fun or whether it is to intensely pursue an education or career or to start and build up a business, will often not have the personal resources to channel into developing a marriage or living together relationship, except with luck or extremely careful and sensitive management and "teamwork", or at least patience and understanding by their spouse.

At any rate, the roommate aspects (she gets up early, wide awake, wants to talk; he is a slow, silent riser; he is a night owl, she passes out after 9:30; one is messy, the other neater, or messier, or also messy but in different ways; neither cooks, both hate to clean up; one is a gourmet, the other likes only meat and potatoes; one wants junk food, the other wants health food; one is quick to anger, the other does slow-burns too long; each has moods the other, at some time, is bound to disturb or be disturbed by; one wants companionship and the other is too busy with outside interests or too tired from them; etc., etc., etc.) are some of the hardest parts of a relationship to cope with, and yet they can be coped with in time generally. And a vow demands that the attempt to cope be made. But some people give up too soon, not really honoring their

vow and their obligation, because they did not expect these kinds of problems. And in getting out of a temporarily bad situation, they do not give themselves the opportunity to solve the problems and to go on to have a really worthwhile relationship with a person they have loved, perhaps do love or could really love again in an even better, more satisfying, more understanding, and more desirable relationship.

I cannot point out what kinds of marital problems justify divorce (except to point to severe and obvious examples such as brutality, total laziness and irresponsibility, cases of alcoholism resulting in abuse and torment where treatment is refused and disdained, etc.) and what kinds are reasonable to try to solve even when that means taking much time and effort. To some extent it is an empirical matter in that social scientists can or could probably find out what kinds of problems tend to arise in different relationships and which of them are generally solved without too much sacrifice by what kinds of people and personalities; and what kinds of problems wreak too much havoc even in trying to solve them. This can be done in part on the basis of accurate reports on what sacrifices couples have felt worthwhile and why, on what problems they feel have been worth solving in what ways and why, and on the basis of reports about problems which could not be solved, could not be solved in a reasonably non-sacrificial way, or whose solution did not make the marriage worthwhile anyway. There needs to be more information about what the practical demands of marriage or living together are or can be. And I assume different types of people will have different kinds of problems; for example, the dependent housewife type married to the paternalistic provider will not necessarily have the same kinds of problems as two egalitarian working types married to each other. And there needs to be more practical information about what attempts were tried, which ones failed or succeeded, and why they did. People should not be prevented nor discouraged from trying to solve a previously unsolvable or unsatisfactorily solvable problem, but neither should they be

required or encouraged to try if there is no reason to expect success.

Much work of this sort will relate to all kinds of relationships, and love relationships at all stages, not just to marriage relationships. Further, in regard to relationships that involve sharing domiciles I suspect many of the same things are true of people who "only" live together as of people who are married. Of course, there are some differences and sometimes friends, neighbors, relatives, etc. may put added pressures on a "living together" relationship, not to mention whatever legal differences (such as having next of kin rights, certain ownership or

inheritance rights, etc.) there might be between marriage and living together. However, the worth and work of overcoming certain difficulties (and the pain and frustration of failure) is still the primary issue both for marrieds and living-togethers, as well as for people who are simply in love, going (steady) together, pinned, or engaged. Further, in all these cases there is a loss when a worthwhile relationship is abandoned too easily whether either or both partners recognize that loss or not. And though people sometimes think that dissolving a living together relationship that goes bad is easier than dissolving a marriage, I suspect that is only true in terms of the legal costs and impediments (apart from palimony suits), not the psychological ones. I doubt it is ever easy to end a relationship that one entered with endearment, enthusiasm, and hope, particularly with a person for whom you still feel great attraction and affection but with whom somehow you are unable to get along as you should. All the self-doubt, guilt, and/or anxiety connected with bad character judgment, failure, and/or defeat can occur over the dissolution of any kind of relationship. Whether married, living together, or just going together. Sometimes, as the song says, "breaking up is hard to do."

I have often felt that getting a divorce was sometimes even perhaps psychologically easier than terminating a living together or going together relationship. A lawyer can handle the negotiations

and details, run interference in uncomfortable or intransigent cases, and can give some emotional support, as can a judge. And they can give some reassurance to you about the legitimacy of your cause (though sometimes, unfortunately, judges and opposing attorneys can be unreasonably and unfairly demoralizing). Further, there can be a psychological finality to a divorce decree that is missing from simply breaking up or moving out. This can help the relationship avoid an even more painful lingering death and can help prevent the pendulum or yo-yo effect of repeatedly trying and failing to get back together again.

At any rate, I would like to emphasize that there can be a beauty and worth for both people in keeping a relationship, growing together, overcoming obstacles, solving conflicts, sharing some of the beautiful moments as well as some of the not so beautiful moments. Life-long loved ones can have a bond and a wealth of experience and understanding that in many cases strangers can never have. To celebrate a fiftieth anniversary that is only the result of having tolerated each other or having stayed together in spite of the relationship is to celebrate a travesty at best and a wasteful tragedy at worst; but to celebrate a fiftieth anniversary where there has been growth in satisfactions, kindnesses to each other, deepening feelings of attraction, and a treasury of shared moments and stored memories is to experience something of a distinctly human nature that is most valuable, even if it has meant some difficult and strained moments and a certain amount of thin along the way with the thick. This is true whether the anniversary is of marriage, living together, or friendship. Lifelong friends have a kind of rapport and relationship that new acquaintances cannot experience. This is not to say, of course, that lifelong relationships are the only good ones; they are not; nor are they necessarily the best ones in all cases, but there is a special value to them that is worth trying to achieve if not too great a sacrifice is necessary.

When I first read Lederer and Jackson's *The Mirages of Marriage* (Lederer 1968), the part in the latter part of the book on establishing

quid pro quo, on working together to re-build or establish a better relationship out of one that had deteriorated seemed to require an amount of work that seemed not worth the effort, even if it worked. Some of the procedures they suggested for establishing honest, effective communication, learning one's own body language, understanding one's own and one's partner's "real" messages, etc. seemed to call for effort above and beyond the call of duty to save a relationship. They seemed embarrassing, tedious, painful, and so basic as to be practically childlike or asinine. A relationship that required that kind of work to be saved seemed to me at the time to be one better scrapped or left to die in peace.

The authors agreed much time and effort could be involved (p. 287): "Naturally the more hate-filled the spouses, the more discordant the marriage, the more difficult it will be to start afresh with a new *quid pro quo*. "Getting the marital process back in balance often can be a long and arduous task. Even with professional help it may require a year or more. In some cases, however, spouses working on their own may be successful in only six to eight weeks, or perhaps a few months, provided both have a keen desire to solve their mutual problems…."

To me at the time, the "only six to eight weeks" and, that, only in exceptional cases, seemed hardly a time period to be excited about. I figured that in less than a year one could easily even be engaged or married to a new person, or at least well on their way to a more satisfying new life than trying to fan dying embers could possibly be. I could not then see the point of their, or any, proposed therapy, even if it worked, if it was as long and arduous as they pointed out. Now I can see the point. It is in the notion of saving a relationship that has once been good and could now be better, and even better than a new one, though it is at a present low point. I am certainly not saying all relationships are salvageable or that all should be salvaged regardless of the cost.

I am only saying that there are techniques, such as Lederer's and Jackson's, that can be (often successfully) employed; and that there is a point to it – that helping a relationship grow and flourish,

even with some sacrifice, can be a good thing that is simply unlike the alternative good thing of terminating the first relationship and beginning a new one. So the answer to "Why bother, even if it would work?" might be "Don't you want to experience at least one long-lasting relationship that for the most part is a good one; we have the start; let us go on and build on that start, if we can."

I still believe that most rational, moral people with some sensitivity and understanding can, and should, work out their differences without too much difficulty or acrimony; but I realize not everyone is rational, moral, and understanding. Relationships involving one or two people who cannot or will not cooperate may best have to just be terminated. And there are some cases where people have changed too much and/or learn they have such divergent and incompatible goals or desires that they cannot fairly compromise or achieve the goals of both. Further, there are some (perhaps rare) cases where even good, concerned, understanding, and rational people cannot figure out what is causing the problem or what is wrong; they just know they are unhappy with the situation but do not know why. More knowledge and insight is needed – though still nothing like psychoanalysis or anything else as intricate and possibly irrelevant.

The Streisand-Redford relationship in *The Way We Were* I think illustrates a case where there is just too much and to significant an incompatibility in what the partners want out of each of their lives to avoid or reconcile without asking an unfair sacrifice by either or both just in order to maintain the relationship in an active ongoing way. In part it was unrecognized when they first became involved, and in part it grew with their relationship. It is easy at the early stages of a love relationship not to notice, not to think significant, or to work around some differences. Also, circumstances may not arise until later that cause or allow some incompatibilities to surface. Some of these incompatibilities may not be reasonably resolved within a continuing close relationship. Feelings may still be loving

ones; but living together in or outside of marriage may just not be satisfactorily possible.

The following are two examples of situations in which problems were hard to exactly describe or uncover before even attempting to solve them. Yet they still did not require mysticism, therapy, or genius to figure out. In the movie *Ryan's Daughter*, the girl of the title role at some very young age marries the village school teacher who is much older and a widower. The scene is a small Irish community in 1917. The girl is inexperienced and fairly naive about romantic relationships and about the sexual and related emotional aspects of relationships. On their wedding night, for intercourse her husband invokes no foreplay, or play of any sort. The act is all under huge covers with heavy nightgowns simply hoisted far enough to manage, and lasts only long enough for her husband to obtain his rather quick, somewhat perfunctory, climax. He is solicitous to her well-being afterward, but has as little understanding about how that might be brought about as she has. He was obviously acting in an obligatory way for her in having intercourse on their wedding night and the only reassurance he needed from her was that he had not (physically) hurt her too much.

After a few months she was seen by the community priest looking sorrowful, as she often had since her marriage. The priest takes this opportunity to chastise her for her seeming eternal and public display of moping self-pity or unhappiness even though she has never spoken to anyone about it. He points out that her husband is a fine man and a kind one, a good provider, solicitous for her happiness, etc. He ends his lecture by demanding of her "What more could you possibly want!" And her answer is only "I don't know; I don't even know what more there is."

At least she had knowledge enough to know there might be something more; but many may never know even that much, and not just in sexual or related areas. A woman, for example, may feel unhappy in a domestic role or socialite role, even if married to a wealthy man who provides not only affection but also all sorts of modern conveniences or even household servants. She may not

even realize how unhappy she is or why, if all of society holds her role up to her as one to be sought and her place as one to be envied. Likewise the husband may be unhappy or unfulfilled (even unknowingly) in his role though it is what he has been taught to seek and though again the community may hold him in very high esteem for it, also not realizing its possible detractions. Perhaps some of the most difficult cases are those in which one is doing everything one is expected to, or has achieved what he or she desires or has been brought up to want, but is troubled by some sort of dissatisfaction they cannot exactly point to, and never even thinks to look then at this desired or praised situation as being the cause. The goals society or are parents set for us may be satisfying to strive for and to achieve at first, just because they are goals and because the praise of others for our endeavors and for our achievement is satisfying; but the goals may not have any real internal value or merit and holding on to them may be hollow and dissatisfying once that is vaguely felt but not clearly realized. And this kind of situation makes complaint difficult and unappreciated. You would get responses like "I should have your problems! It must be really tough trying to figure out what to have the maid do next;" or "trying to figure out what time during each day you should schedule the racquetball court." Or, to a despondent war veteran, "you got your medals for being in the war – what more do you expect; you should be grateful you got back alive and in one piece since so many others did not," (but this may be the cause of the problem – some feeling of undeserved opportunity or inadequacy in fulfilling it).

The other case, though one that was less involving of the total relationship but just as difficult to diagnose, was that mentioned earlier involving my friend and me where she seemed to get or be depressed or weepy the day after particularly happy days we shared. That the weepy days even followed and only followed such good days was not noticed until after a great many occurrences. Only then was it even realized that there was perhaps some particular problem, as opposed to just passing arbitrary moods, let-downs

from the previous days' pinnacles, or a number of different, unrelated problems.

Neither of us could figure out the cause. And the problem was not terribly defined for her; she only knew that she felt weepy or depressed, not why or over what. Then one day, for no particular reason, it came to us. I was not telling her enough about how much I had enjoyed or appreciated the day before with her. It was not that I did not appreciate those days, nor that I did not make it clear at the time how much the occasion or the time had meant to me. It was that I was not making that clear again the following day, when she needed or expected to hear it.

She always sent little cards (greeting cards or just personal notes) to whoever said or did something particularly nice for her or when some event or function had been held. I sent thank- you notes for parties or gifts and I also was appreciative of nice things that were said or done or of times with friends that were spontaneously enjoyable. But I did not send notes about these latter types of things, nor did I usually comment on any given day about how nice a previous day had been. I would comment at the time or show appreciation at the time, but not on the following day unless there was some specific reason to reminisce then or to bring it up again. In fact people who sent cards or notes, or who made nice comments, about immediately past nice times that were more or less accidental or that were spontaneous, or equally caused and enjoyed by them and by me, made me feel somewhat uneasy. To me it almost even seemed (and still does) to cheapen or trivialize the experience by treating it the same as any formal and often empty occasion that required a formal and often meaningless response. I simply attributed her notes and/or store-bought greeting cards about these kinds of situations to some kind of empty etiquette she had learned at an early age or to some kind of female nicety, and I actually tried to ignore them so I would not see them as trivializing what had been terribly important to me. But it turned out this was not empty etiquette on her part, but a way of actually showing how important the occasion was to her; and my not doing so was

evidence dimly felt by her that it was not as important to me. In part it was dimly felt because it was not only unsubstantiated, but contradicted by all my other behavior. Hence her feeling that things were not as important to me as they were to her never arose close enough to the surface for her to identify it as that, but it did come close enough for her to somehow feel a kind of general sadness or disappointment. In the future we realized we had this different appreciation of expression about previous days' joys and she tried not to expect them from me while I tried to remember to give them regardless of how demonstrative I had been during that previous day. All this took months before a problem was seen or the simple solution found; yet it was months of weepy days that might not have had to be; or that could have gone on forever or eventually grown to cause a great deal of damage had not some small ray of light appeared from out of nowhere.

One Aspect of Commitment

Part of what it is to make a make a marriage commitment is to try to overlook in many cases little things that might otherwise bother you, such as your partner leaving the cap off the toothpaste or wanting to watch some particular television series that seems especially inane to you. There are probably millions of kinds of things that could be annoying if you let them be annoying. The point is to try not to let them be. The point of the marriage commitment (vow) or any kind of relationship commitment is to try to work things out or to try to ignore them when necessary or more appropriate. Leaving the cap off the toothpaste is not grounds for divorce, but it should also not be grounds for touching off anger (more about controlling feelings shortly) or larger problems which may become grounds for divorce. Commitment, making promises, taking vows all mean that certain things have to be overlooked or have to try to be solved rather than just being counted as reasons for growing less loving, angrier, or for leaving.

Let me give a simple example of how making a commitment changes or creates obligations. Consider being asked out on a date

by someone you hardly know and with whom you have no special reason to have to go out. Not really feeling like going to a movie or a dance or whatever the occasion, or not feeling like going to it with them is sufficient grounds for not accepting the date (though, of course, one should generally show appreciation for being asked and be polite and tactful in one's refusal). But if you make or accept the date, then later simply "not feeling" like it is not sufficient grounds for not going, particularly if it is to something like a prom and you do not break it until the date is at the doorstep with his tux and flowers or her new expensive dress. Not being in the mood is sufficient grounds not to accept the date, but insufficient grounds to break it, particularly if your acceptance has put into motion time-consuming, expensive, or careful plans and/or generated high expectations. Making a date creates an obligation that requires a stronger excuse or justification to break the date than is necessary for simply turning one down in the first place, which may require no reason at all. Illness, accident, catastrophe, a greater obligation to a friend or relative, or any of a number of things may allow one to justifiably or excusably break a date, but they have to be relatively important. There does not have to be any (important) reason at all not to accept a date in the first place.

Similarly, one in general (that is, apart from arranged marriages, shotgun weddings, etc.) is under no obligation to enter a loving relationship, engagement, living arrangement or marriage with anyone; but once one has, he or she incurs an obligation to stay in it – an obligation that is not irrevocable, but one which requires a relatively important justification or excuse to revoke it. Now since hardly any relationship is possible, I suspect, where two people love everything about each other – snoring, hoarding covers, stealing joke punchlines or never laughing at them,being too neat or not neat enough, not being interested in some things that are important to you, inability to balance a checkbook or too demanding that it be balanced, being to lazy or too compulsive, etc., etc. – commitment and assumed obligation require that irritating, but not ignoble,

behavior should either be ignored, isolated, or cured in some way without being allowed to become a true impediment or detriment to the relationship. Again, social scientists,clergymen, marriage counselors, or even comedians could point out the kinds of pitfalls to be watched for, avoided, ignored, muffled, solved, or just laughed at, rather than allowed to get out of hand. Promises or commitments or vows mean simply that one's word has to be tried to be kept – not in spite of all circumstances nor even in spite of overwhelming other conflicting duties, such as some duties to one's self, but – in spite of many, particularly relatively unimportant, circumstances.

Feelings and Commitment

When two young, starry-eyed people marry, promising to love, honor, and cherish till death parts them, they often cannot imagine their feelings will ever be any different for each other, any less romantic or intense. Yet it is unlikely that particular feeling will remain very long into their marriage. Although we can have some control over our feelings and our reactions to them, feelings are not the kinds of things it is wise to make promises about because we have less control over them than we do of our actions. One can reasonably promise to act kindly or lovingly toward another, but one cannot reasonably promise to feel lovingly (at least not in the starry-eyed way) toward another. It is a hollow, though well-intentioned, promise because we do not have the kind of control over our feelings that is necessary for accepting total responsibility for them. Similarly, we cannot reasonably promise not ever to become attracted to anyone else, but we can meaningfully and reasonably promise not to act on that attraction in a way that would undeservingly hurt our mate.

Now we do have some control over our feelings and our reactions to them, and to that extent, our commitment to love does obligate us to try to keep loving feelings and to try to act lovingly, or at least civilly, in spite of (temporary) feelings to the contrary. One of the best ways to control feelings or to have the proper, though not necessarily the natural, response to them is to understand them – understand nuances in them, understand exactly what we are

feeling, understand how feelings are likely to change (naturally) over time, and understand our normal and natural responses to those feelings and their effects. This enables us to know whether it would be wise to let those natural responses occur even if we can avoid them, whether it would be wise to display them in private if we cannot avoid them, or whether it would be wise to try to modify the feelings or our responses to them if we can partially avoid or control them.

For example, it is important to understand the difference between hate and anger, particularly that anger is temporary and may be over something that can be resolved before it gets out of hand. One may think one hates (or at least no longer loves) one's mate and be tempted to retaliate for a supposed wrong since he or she has no love left to lose anyway. Retaliation by a spiteful or hateful act may cost one a relationship that could have been (easily) salvaged had one not aggravated the situation, but let the anger pass instead. And if one could not behave properly around the loved one while angry, one should isolate oneself from the loved one for a short time to try to let the anger pass before doing or saying something one might legitimately regret. In such a circumstance one might even say something like "I am so mad right now I think I had better go (out, to my study, to the office, to the tennis court, to the gym, for a long walk, fishing, or wherever) before I say something really stupid that will make you mad too and that I'll regret saying."

It is important to understand disappointment, frustration, and hostility too and to be able to recognize them and their specific cause so that you do not take out those feelings on your partner or channel them toward him or her, especially when he or she is not to blame for them.

You do not want to kick your spouse or the dog when you get home because the boss kicked you or because you made an error at work that really upsets you about yourself. The better you can understand how negative feelings work in you and how you can deal with them so as to work through your problems and rid yourself of,

or deal properly with, the negative feelings without doing damage, the more likely you will be able to keep such feelings from (further) damaging your relationship when they arise. Experience and self-understanding should help you learn and develop new ways to better cope with such negative feelings as you grow.

Knowing, for example, that anger subsides can sometimes allow you to help make it subside faster. Venting it by talking things over with a friend or third party, even complaining to them about your partner in an angry way, can help you explode out of range of doing damage to your relationship, as long your friend or third party understands this is temporary and therapeutic and can be trusted to be discreet. Just trying to smash the cover off of a tennis ball can help get rid of the rage until you can discuss the problem in a civilized or even humorous manner with your spouse.

If I am being moody and irritable, my wife can get me to talk about it and quit acting that way quite often by asking with obviously phony sweetness whether she needs to drive me to the hospital to have my burr removed by the proctologist of my choice. Sometimes I have tried to say I was just having fun being irritable, but if she laughs at that it makes me laugh and then it is really hard for me to retain my irritability.

Of course, I would claim she has the worst kind of anger, because when she is mad at you, she won't tell, gives the cold shoulder, mutters under her breath, and builds to a crescendo of hostile resentment until you cannot miss that she is upset. Asking her what is wrong compounds the crime because then you also demonstrate your insensitivity and ignorance. Guessing out loud what I think she thinks I may have done wrong is stupid because she takes that as a litany of confessions to crimes I must feel I have committed and am only admitting under duress, giving her that much more reason to be angry. Getting her to talk about what she thinks (or, for sarcasm, imagines) I have done wrong is the hardest part of resolving most of our disagreements. What seems to work is to use her interest in law to demand to be charged with the crime I am being held for so that I can plead guilty and beg for mercy or prepare my defense.

I know a widow who had nothing but wonderful things to say about her 35 years of marriage. One day I asked whether it was all as rosy as she seems to imply; "weren't there days you couldn't stand your husband?" "Oh yes," she said, but I would do something about it, like one day I asked him 'Wouldn't you like to go fishing today with Fred and George – I've packed lunches for all of you!' He got the point, the fishing gear, the guys, and out of the house for a while."

Realizing how former angry times have been only temporary and have lapsed into episodes you can now recall dispassionately, analytically, or even humorously, should help you get through a present angry episode, since you can believe, even if you do not quite feel, that it too will fade like the others.

And it is not impossible to control your reactions to being angered or hurt and to be able to respond to and express that anger or hurt in a civilized way. I have seen people even be able to modify their pain responses (or reflexes) when there was some reason to do that. I have seen chemistry students accidentally pick up in their bare hands, and yet not drop, nearly red-hot crucibles that contained the products on which their grade depended, products that took them two weeks to prepare. It feels like something is biting you, but you have learned not to make any sudden moves in chemistry class because you can spill something important. And even when you realize your sudden pain is coming from this crucible you are holding which moments earlier you had heated red hot in a Bunsen burner, you do not fling it down and watch your grade spill out all over the counter or floor. You set it down very carefully, move back, and then making sure nothing is around to knock over, you jump and clutch your fried fingers with your other hand.

In my later teenage years, I thought it would be "cool" to try to learn to be able to deal in front of others with sudden and obvious pain by just calmly saying something like, "Gee, that really hurts," instead of by jumping around and cursing or screaming. I practiced by imagining situations and by thinking about what I should have said after the times I failed. I finally perfected it and it was fun to watch people's faces when I had just obviously been hurt (say by

a child accidentally whacking you in the ankle with a heavy toy). I would think that if people can do these sorts of things it would not be impossible to learn to express anger just by saying you are very angry. (This may not be the most effective expression, however – some people seem to require a more graphic demonstration before they will believe you – but it is perhaps the best place to start, since many people will apologize or cease their behavior the minute they understand they are doing something that is provoking. If someone does not, you can always escalate to appropriately hostile behavior yourself. And if you say it nicely you may not make them defensive, hostile, and belligerent, as you otherwise might.)

Anger and feeling unloved or unloving are often temporary. Just as special moments of tenderness and closeness may be fleeting, so often are moments of anger or distance. It is important to know that though one feels angry or hurt or unloving and unloved, such feelings can pass, and actions which needlessly prolong or deepen such negative feelings should not be initiated. In moments of anger it is often best either to remain silent, or if comment is imperative, then the comment should not be needlessly hostile or aggravating of the situation. One can usually express one's side or one's views or even one's anger in a civilized manner without thereby having to further alienate the other person. General decency alone demands this; commitment in a loving relationship *increases* that demand, though not infinitely or in spite of prolonged and/or really terrible behavior. Commitment and concern for your partner, along with the understanding that the negative feeling will pass, should help you not worsen the situation, and should help the relationship better survive relatively minor adversity or momentarily alienating situations.

Key Takeaways

- Commitments (such as promises, vows, mutual agreements, etc.) bestow obligations of varying strengths or degrees on one to keep them.
- The more important the commitment, the stronger the obligation there is to keep it. Insofar as any commitment can legitimately be overridden, stronger, more binding ones require a much higher ethical justification than weaker ones to do that.

Key Terms

- A ***marriage vow*** is essentially a promise; and promises, just because they are made, bestow an obligation on you to try to keep them; that is the point of them. Marriage vows do not say "love, honor, and cherish till death do us part, forty thousand miles, or the first sign of problems, whichever comes first".

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Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: In terms of love relationships, what does commitment demand?
- ***Question***: What is the point of a marriage vow?

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Chapter 17 Rejection and Acceptance

Chapter 17 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Discover that being liked or not being liked (not only romantically, but in other areas as well) is not necessarily in anyone's control.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to see how you deal with rejection in a relationship.

The story goes there was a famous older man who had never married. He was often asked why he had never married and his answer was that he was looking for the perfect woman. He had found her once, he said, but since she was looking for the perfect man, it had not worked out.

When someone says he or she is looking for the perfect mate, others usually reply there is no such person; or if there is, such people are so rare the odds are slim of finding them. The man in the story above was, I suspect, jokingly talking about a woman who was perfect, period, not just one who was perfect for him, regardless of how imperfect she might be for someone else. But I suspect when most people talk about seeking a perfect mate, they mean for them, not for everyone and not perfect in general. I think it would immensely increase chances for success to seek a partner that is perfect for a particular person rather than to seek someone who would be a perfect partner for anyone. I doubt anyone could be perfect for everyone. Though people often have friends who are very different from each other, it is nearly impossible to imagine

anyone who could have such varied interests, abilities, tastes, and allure that he or she could be perfect for everyone and anyone. People are suited or suitable to each other, not just "suitable" in general. "Most eligible" bachelors are usually not ideal for all, or perhaps even many, single women; two young or two elderly people might be very well suited for each other but not for those twice or half their ages; two lesbians might be quite well suited to each other without being even remotely suited to the most eligible bachelors.

As I said earlier, feelings are funny things in that they sometimes seem to have no reasonable basis, and they may persist even in the face of good reasons to the contrary. Often they do not occur when you think they should. You may not be attracted to a person who you know is very good for you; you may become attracted or remain attracted to someone who you know treats you terribly or who repeatedly disappoints you. It is not clear to me that there is often any cause or any (fore)seeable cause for attraction to occur when it does, or for it not to occur when it does not. Many times you feel you can see what it is about someone that attracts you to them or that attracts other people to them. But this is not always, or perhaps even often, true. Many times you might see someone objectively better looking and/or better behaving than the one you are attracted to, but you may not thereby be attracted to the new person at all. Many people have twin siblings who look identical yet the lover of one twin may have no feelings of attraction for the second twin at all. Name any trait you tend to find appealing in a person and that you think then makes the person appeal, or be attractive, to you – physical beauty, wit, intelligence, being good with children, kindness, tenderness, pragmatism, conscientiousness, good sense of humor, etc. – and people could probably name dozens of people with that trait who you are not, and would not be, attracted to. Attraction (and rejection) just seem in many cases, particularly when they occur at first sight (or shortly thereafter) to be arbitrary, and, if not accidental, at least not predictable at all.

Hence, whether any two people hit it off, particularly in some romantic or attracting way, and particularly at first sight or first communication, seems to me to have a lot more to do with luck or coincidence than with anything else. It seems to me to be a function of the two of them together more than it is the result of the characteristics by themselves of either one of them as an individual. Few people attract everyone and few repulse everyone. A person rejected at first encounter by one person may be attractive at first encounter (even the same kind of encounter) to another. One person may find a particular "opening line" cute; another person, repulsive or infantile. One person may not like a "line" at all. One person may be attracted to someone who likes children or who likes Bach; another person may find that kind of person not to their taste. Some people tend to prefer outgoing people; others, introverted ones. Anything at all can be at once an attracting feature to one person, a rejecting feature to another, and an immaterial feature to a third.

Even in business relationships, personal characteristics and style can make a difference. Some people find friendly those who introduce themselves assertively, reach for your hand to shake it, and talk about what business they are in; others find that kind of behavior too aggressive and pushy. Once I was lectured about my appearance by my employer as we drove to a place where he wanted to meet for the first time, and wanted me to meet, someone with whom he hoped to do a lot of business. I had a job where a suit jacket or sport coat was a cumbersome problem and could easily get ruined; so I had begun simply to wear dress shirts and ties unless I knew I would be seeing someone "important". That day I had been caught unprepared. The boss, in his three piece pin stripes, talked on and on about the unfavorable impression this important new businessman he wanted to court would likely form of him and me because I was not wearing a jacket. He was only taking me along because he needed my expertise for the meeting. When we arrived at the place of business, the highly successful owner there was

wearing a T-shirt, with Mickey Mouse's picture on the front no less. I wonder what he thought of my boss in his pin stripes.

In my own business as a photographer now I try to keep an informal style since I find that helps my clients relax under the otherwise ego threatening pressure of having their picture taken. I am serious about my work but not about myself. And I try to get my clients not to take the situation so seriously that the result will be too stiff for their liking. Usually I can achieve that, but the same kind of comment that will relax nine out of ten people will offend the tenth. I even answer my own phone at my studio, which many people find personal and therefore like, but which, I am told, really makes some people feel they must be dealing with an incompetent, unprofessional amateur. Some days when business is chaotic and harried, I become flippant on the phone, and that has both secured for me my best customers (who were looking for a photographer that could probably evoke some life from them during their sitting) and cost me some appointments I may otherwise have made. The losses cause me disappointment and temporary disillusionment with myself until I remember the clients I would not have attracted had I been more "business like". Different people just seem to have different tastes, even in photographers, even over the phone. I don't go out of my way to offend anyone nor to fawn over anyone, so I am always fascinated when the exact same approach is absolutely magnetic to some people while totally repugnant to others.

I have found that in personal relationships the same kind of thing happens to nearly everyone. Some people like you the way you are or because of it; others do not. Short of your being harmful or patently offensive to another person, rejection or attraction (particularly, but not only, at first sight) and getting along well with someone else are such a matter of luck and circumstance that in a way there is little in it of a personal nature. That is, it should not really be a matter of self-pride to hit it off with someone (since there are lots of people you would not) nor of self-defeat when you do not (since there are lots of people with whom you would). Getting along well with another person, or not getting along well with them

is as much a function of the other person – their character, desires, abilities, interests, tastes, chemistry and personality – as it is of your character, appearance, abilities, personality, chemistry, etc. Hence, acceptance or rejection should not generally be taken as a reflection of just you alone, but of the two of you in combination.

Similarly with regard to dissolving some of the ties in a previously close relationship (breaking up, divorcing, changing the relationship from being lovers to being friends, etc.) Though in some cases one person is at fault for the disintegration or reduction of satisfaction, goodness, and/or attraction in the relationship, it is probably far more frequent that such disintegration or reduction is a function of the two persons in combination with each other rather than just one of them. If two people are simply not, or are no longer, very satisfactory for, good for, or attracted to each other, no matter how hard they try or how much they would like to be, then it may very likely be no poor reflection on either of them. It may be neither's fault individually that the relationship cannot be or stay a close, active, loving one.

All this (becoming or staying in love) is short of your being patently offensive, of course, or behaving badly toward another person. (Some people may become or stay attracted to people who act bratty, brutish, or beastly anyway, but it is not to be expected.) Any behavior and appearance short of that may cause or allow you to be liked or disliked by different people. This is equally true even later on in a relationship; plenty of people who are bad spouses for each other, with no change at all make fine spouses for different mates. What pleases one person may distress another or be unimportant to a third. Similarly with what is attracting. Hence, although there is good reason to cultivate proper manners, deserved self-confidence, social ability, and whatever other knowledge, abilities, and character traits that may be good or appropriate, they are hardly any guaranty they will make some given person become attracted to you or be pleased by you – especially in

those areas that are of particular psychological importance to him or her.

Even having traits that may be good for other people, is, apart from ordinary civility and common decency, often just lucky circumstance. Two people interested in history may be very good for each other but boring to others. This book may be meaningful to people whose concerns it addresses, but it will probably be thought hairsplitting and worthless to people who have no desire to think about the topic in the ways I do. I think Phil Donahue's interview and discussion style is just about perfect, since I think he raises the key points and issues about a topic in a very short span of time and since he has the right combination of forcefulness, energy, concentration, and playfulness to get people to respond concisely and appropriately without being intimidated. Yet his style is often the object of sarcastic cartoons and editorial harpoons. One writer described Donahue's style as wordy, contentious, and often irresponsible (because he raised issues that writer thought people should not hear discussed). But I see the work I read of that particular author as erroneous, simplistic, and irrational – the kind of work that would be most vulnerable to Donahue's kind of analytic probing. That writer and I would probably not get along well together. Being good for someone else requires a blend (between the two of you) of interests, abilities, personalities, knowledge, and other characteristics (over and above ordinary manners and decency) that cannot be expected to be the same for everyone. It requires a "***meshing***" or fit that cannot be expected to be the same for everyone. It requires a meshing of qualities that would not be helpful to many other people. Once two people, whose characteristics so luckily happen to mesh, find each other, changing circumstances may alter the fit. A certain amount of effort and ability in trying to keep up with new areas of interest and importance to each other may help to overcome otherwise alienating circumstances, but even then I think a certain amount of luck is necessary for people to be able to pursue their individual

interests and still remain ideally suited to (and perfect for) each other over many years.

To this extent, being good for someone else cannot be something one can cultivate or achieve just by one's own reasonable effort. No one can prepare oneself to become or remain someone else's ideal or ideally suited mate while also following their own interests and abilities, and letting their own good character traits blossom and unfold. That is one of the reasons that I do not believe for A to love B that A must be good for, or try to be good for, B – particularly in areas of importance for B and/or B's development. I think that, as a human being with normal ethical obligations (to be discussed later), A has various obligations to people, including B, but they do not include the obligation to try always perfectly to mesh with B or B's psychologically important or meaningful interests. That is asking too much of A. It is great when it happens naturally, but it cannot be demanded or expected. If and when A fails to (continue to) ideally suit B, it may not be because A loves B less or is less loving or did not try hard enough to love B. It may be just because they grew "apart" ("unmeshed") to whatever (minor or major) extent, due to circumstances beyond reasonable control. The relationship may even have become better and thereby more loving for A, just not for B.

Key Takeaways

- Being accepted or rejected, unless one is patently offensive, wrongful, or an otherwise terrible person, should not be the ego boost or ego threat it is usually taken to be. It is more a matter of lucky meshing or unlucky clashing between or among people whether

they are attracted to each other or not.

- It doesn't bother most people that all the many people they are not attracted to are also not attracted to them, so 'rejection' (in the sense of someone's not being, or no longer being attracted to them) only seems to be disappointing or devastating when it comes from someone one likes and wants to be liked by in return, particularly if time and energy have gone into cultivating or developing the relationship.

Key Terms

- A "**meshing**" or "fit"...a meshing of qualities. Once two people, whose characteristics so luckily happen to mesh, find each other, changing circumstances may alter the fit.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question:*** Is getting along well with another person a reflection of either of you alone? Why or why not?
- ***Question***: What is necessary for people to be able to pursue their individual interests and still remain a

viable couple?

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Chapter 18 Care and Concern

Chapter 18 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Describe when, and in what ways, care or concern matter.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn how you can show empathy in a relationship.

To some extent ***care and concern*** could be treated under feelings but they also have something to do with ethics and with how much people try to satisfy each other too.

Perhaps we should care equally about all people, or at least about all good or deserving people, or all potentially good people, but in fact, most people do not care about all others equally. They have particular people about whose happiness and or well-being they are concerned; people whose happiness or well-being they want to preserve, promote, and see preserved and promoted.

Sometimes, however, people are jealously protective about who promotes and preserves another's welfare; they want to be the (only) ones to do it and to get credit for it. If someone else does good for or satisfies a loved one, such people may be hurt or may question the motives or intentions of the benefactor, or they may feel their

loved one's affections are being alienated. Sometimes such feelings are well-founded, but often not.

For now, let me say about jealousy that it is unwarranted if its cause is not something that detracts from the original relationship, but it is reasonable if its cause is something that undeservedly detracts from the original relationship or promotes the well-being of the one partner only at the undeserved expense of the other. (I say *undeserved* because there are some cases, such as where one partner is abusing the other, that someone – whether friend, counselor, lover, or whatever – *should* intervene in the relationship to promote the victim's well- being even at the expense of the jealous "lover.") For example, I think one has a right to be angry or hurt if their partner stands them up or leaves them to be otherwise avoidably lonely or to do some undesirable task alone that was supposed to be worked on together while the partner has a good time with some third person or group of friends. It is not that the stood up person has a right to resent the happiness of the offending partner, but that he or she has a right to resent that it happened at his or her undeserved expense. More about jealousy later, however.

My main point about care and concern, is that they are, except in certain circumstances, no substitute for proper actions – actions that promote or preserve well-being and satisfaction, regardless of whether they are accompanied or brought about by care and concern or not. If one is ill or drowning, it would be better to be properly diagnosed or rescued by an uncaring computer or robot than to be in the presence of the most concerned person with no medical knowledge or swimming ability. Similarly, in a relationship; in general good intentions are insufficient when better or more satisfying actions are needed or desired. Just as attractions do not insure satisfying or good actions toward each other, neither does caring or being concerned just by themselves.

I have seen parents who are concerned about their children's well-being but who, in their concern to keep the children happy, actually spoil their children and end up making them less happy

and less well off than they would have been otherwise. They give them too much junk food for their health, do not force them to get enough sleep for their health and mental alertness, and do not teach them enough about how to behave properly to let them make and keep friends and make favorable impressions on others. This kind of parental concern for immediate gratification is a short-sighted concern that in the long run is almost as bad as no concern at all. Similarly some adults are so concerned about the immediate satisfaction or happiness of a loved one that they treat their loved ones in ways that are harmful in the long run – harmful for the loved one (as in serving them too much fatty foods just because they like the taste of them) or harmful for the relationship. For example, if one of the partners gives in to the unfair demands of another just to keep peace or to keep the other partner happy, the partner who gives in may be fostering or reinforcing immature behavior in the other and also may be preventing the relationship from becoming a more mature and more equally satisfying one. Care and concern (particularly when they are misdirected, but even when they are not) do not by themselves mean you will act correctly nor promote the well-being of your partner or improvement in your relationship.

One time while my wife and I were discussing installing some sort of wooden flooring in our home, I knew she was disappointed that it was too expensive for us to have it done. I tried to tease her out of her depressed mood by saying that I would do it myself to save money and just hope that it came out correctly and evenly put down. That got a rise out of her (my handiwork usually leaves more than a little to be desired) and she said we simply would have to wait until a time we could afford to have it done by a professional. I asked "Why? He probably wouldn't hope as hard as I would!" That got the laugh out of her I had wanted – since obviously care, concern, and hope were not nearly so important in this case as was the skilled competence of someone who would do the job right, regardless of how much or how little he or she cared about it.

Now it is usually nice to have someone care about you or be concerned about your well-being.

And this, coupled with the right or satisfying actions then, is preferable (all other things being equal) to the same activity by people who are devoid of such feelings. Likewise, if no action can help, as in the case of a terminal illness or accident, it is generally nicer to have people around who care or are concerned even though everyone is powerless to help. But even then there are right and wrong ways to behave – for example, excessive hand wringing, crying, or cursing fate may not do the victim any emotional good and may bring her or him even further grief or agony.

Care and concern are certainly nice to have in relationships, but they are not so important, I don't believe, as correct (good and/or satisfying) behavior. I have intentionally left out of the analysis that for A to love B, A must care about B's well-being. First, it should be noted most people would probably not want to say that for A to love B, A actually has to benefit B, since one can love another and want to do and try to do what is right for the other without being successful in that attempt. A may not even know what would be good for B, let alone be able to bring it about if he or she did know. But I believe that it is not even a necessary condition for A to (be correctly said to) love B that A even tries to satisfy or do good things for B. I will argue later, concerning Harry Stack Sullivan's definition of love given in Lederer and Jackson's Mirages of Marriage, that concern for another is not sufficient for there to be love, other than in some Christian or humanistic or humanitarian sense, if that. What I wish to explain here is that it is also not a necessary condition.

Certainly, it is psychologically normal that if one is attracted to another (and especially if one is satisfied by and knowingly benefitted by him or her) one will want to be good to them, satisfy them, and have them be attracted to you in return. This is simply to say on my terms that if one loves another, one will usually want to be loved in return. But this is not always the case. Even just considering attraction, one may perfectly well be content to be attracted to another without caring about whether attraction is felt in return or not.

One may also not want to do what is best or most pleasing for one's partner; an unreasonably jealous lover is still a lover even though he or she may not want anyone else pleasing or helping his loved one, even if that is in the loved one's overall best interest. (If the loved one prefers having the jealousy of such a partner to having help or satisfaction from a third person, then the partner's jealously denying the love's potential joy by the third party actually increases the love's overall joy. Some people like to have very jealous and over-protective mates; some do not especially appreciate such jealous behavior by their partner.) If a lover had to have his or her partner's best interest in mind, an unreasonably jealous lover would be a contradiction in terms. So would perhaps even a reasonably jealous lover.

Of course, we could say this; and, of course, it would be easy to add as the fourth condition to the analysis of "A loves B" that "4) A in general wants to or tries to improve B's well-being and B's satisfaction."

But I believe it does not belong in the analysis and would be added incorrectly because (1) I do not think all people require those who love them to care about their well-being or satisfaction, especially if they provide it for whatever reason, whether intentionally or caringly or not (as in the case of someone who loves for their mate to be jealous and over-protective even though the mate is not doing it for the loved one's own good) (2) I think everyone should care about the well-being of others in general, so that not doing so shows more about what kind of person you are in general than whether you are a lover or person in love or not; (3) I think you can be attracted to another from afar, receive benefit from them, and receive joy from them – in short, love them from afar – without making any effort to have that love returned; that is, without trying to benefit or satisfy the one you love or without trying to have them become attracted to you (or even know you); you are the one loving, or in love, not them; (4) most importantly, insofar as you feel unloved or unhappy because you feel the other person does not care about your happiness or well-being (a feeling usually brought about, by

the way, probably because he or she does not make you feel happy or well-off, whether intending to or not), then your happiness is diminished and therefore it is your love for them, not their love for you, that is diminished. It is diminished (and if diminished too far, extinguished) by either of two ways – either in causing your attraction to be diminished (or extinguished) or in causing that attraction to be less (or not at all) one of love, but more one of infatuation, sacrifice, masochism, or something else.

Whatever your attraction is for someone who harms you or makes you unhappy, it is not love. And any part of your attraction that is unjustified by the actions or character of your loved one is a part of attraction that has nothing to do with love. So if your attraction is diminished by continuous dissatisfaction or harm because your loved one does not care about you, you love your partner less, and if attraction is undiminished but you are dissatisfied or harmed because your partner does not care about you, then your attraction has that much less right to be thought of as totally an attraction of love. Insofar as your partner's lack of care and concern (in spite of their being good for you and good to you) bothers you, you are the one who is less loving, not they.

(5) Also consider the following case, called to my attention as a protest to this position by Priscilla Eggleston and Carol Milner. They claim that for a person to treat their mate shabbily, even after they have been told that they are disappointing and hurting their mate, means that they are doing it intentionally and with no consideration for their mate's feelings. "And that is not very loving behavior. How can they say they still love their mate when they treat him or her like dirt!" My response to this is (a) first you want to make sure the treatment really is bad treatment and not just unreasonably disappointing treatment. You don't want to say someone has to prove their love by doing everything their mate wants, particularly if what their mate wants is unreasonable to demand – for example, "if you loved me you would quit playing tennis with your friends." But assuming we are talking about unreasonable or bad, actually

shabby, treatment. Then (b) there are still certain cases we could say A still could love B even though A treats B badly. For example, if A has some pathological physical condition, such as a tumor, that causes A to act irrationally and reprehensibly toward B even though A honestly professes love (attraction, etc.) for B, we might want to say A cannot help how he or she acts but he or she really does love B.

Similarly, if A were an alcoholic who had not learned to cope with it; A's alcoholism might be terribly painful to B, but it is not true that if A loved B, A would stop drinking. A's drinking may have nothing at all to do with B and/or A's feelings for B and the value and joy A receives from B. A friend of mine knows a couple where the man continually disparages his wife's intelligence, even in front of other people. He has been told it hurts his wife's feelings, but he is a rather sarcastic and cynical person in general, and he seems unable to stop this for any length of time; and he seems to do it naturally, and he also does it more or less about everybody else too. Some people do all kinds of wrong things and act badly, sometimes intentionally toward others, and I do not always understand why they do that. But I think it is often more a problem with their (moral) character (or sometimes with their physiology) than it is a problem with their feelings (or love) or than it is a sign that they do not have loving feelings or even concern for their mate. An alcoholic may feel terribly upset with how his behavior hurts his mate but he/she may not (be able to) remedy that behavior.

Likewise, a person who treats others badly may treat his or her mate badly, not because they do not love their mate, but because, for whatever reason, they do not behave properly toward people. (c) In some cases a person may have reasonable interests and strong urges that conflict with their mate's reasonable desires. Claus von Bulow claimed that he and his wife fought, not over his mistresses, but over the kind of job he held. She wanted him, he said, to work 9 to 5 seven months a year so they could party with her friends and summer in Newport, etc., and he couldn't get any sort of job

(he felt comfortable with) that fit that description. Or if a person does not have the sexual interests his/her partner does, but does not want the partner having extra-marital sex, nor is the first willing to compromise somehow about sexually satisfying the partner with the stronger (or more frequent) sex drive, is the second any less loving if he/she discreetly cheats, even if it hurts the other's feelings? In some cases, perhaps not. I doubt you would want to argue that if A loved B more A would want sex more often, and if B loved A more, B would want sex less often. I would not want to argue that was necessarily or even usually true.

I don't know why a person would treat someone they loved shabbily, but I suspect it is not always because they do not love them. But I also do not know why anyone would treat even strangers shabbily; love is not a prerequisite for good behavior or for civility. I see shabby treatment more as a (sometimes physiological problem, but often simply as a) character problem, or moral and moral character problem. It is not necessarily a sign of lack of love on A's part. A may treat B like scum just because A is a scummy person. Or A may just be in a scummy mood and for some irrational reason takes such moods out on B (kicks the dog and abuses the wife and kids after frustration at the office or the unemployment line, etc.). Or A may be testing B's love for her/him or may just be acting badly because "the devil is making him/her do it." There are times one finds oneself saying things one does not want to say – knowing they are hurtful, and maybe even false, statements. One regrets it even before and while one is saying it, yet one says it anyway. "The devil makes you do it" is about the way it feels. (People also say things they know are stupid and that will make them look stupid – and they do not want to say these things, but they say them anyway. Who knows why? I don't.) People do all kinds of bad and stupid things they know better than to do and that consciously they don't even want to do. Why? I don't know, but I don't believe lack of love has a whole lot to do with it generally. Even not loving someone would not justify nor explain treating them shabbily.

Finally, (6) It is possible that two people can be especially good

and satisfying for each other because of their personality, character, interests, knowledge, skills, habits, desires, outlooks, etc. without either one especially trying to please the other or trying to benefit the other – at least no more so than they would try to please or benefit anyone else. This is, I think, what in fact does happen where people fall in love or are in love. It is not that there is some particular effort to please or benefit, though that may occur at times, but it is that satisfaction and good result because of the way each of you interact and respond naturally to the other. Each of you happens to need, want, appreciate, or is improved by what the other happens naturally or already to do, to have, or to offer. It is this mutual satisfaction and good that are important, rather than whether it was intentional or not, and rather than whether it occurs because you each try to make it occur or because you try harder to make it occur with each other than you would with anyone else. Insofar as my attraction for you is accompanied (or warranted) by your being good for me and satisfying or enjoyable to me, then that attraction is one of love for you. And insofar as I am good for you and satisfying for you and you are attracted to me, your attraction is love for me. And both are true whether either of us tries to satisfy and benefit the other to any particular extent out of concern and caring (or trying to any extent more than we would try to satisfy or benefit anyone else), or whether it just happens because we simply mesh in the right way and were lucky to meet.

Insofar as lovers and loved ones continue to satisfy and benefit each other and continue to be attracted to each other, they will justifiably be said to love each other, regardless of whether they are working at it for each other, for themselves (A might work to please B for A's own advantage, say, in order to keep B's love so that B will remain in the relationship), or whether they are not working at it at all but are just lucky to "mesh" or "fit" with each other naturally with no (unusual) work required.

Now insofar as one does not care at all about the other's well-being and joy, one may not continue to provide or accomplish it; but

in not providing or accomplishing it, it means the other loses love for them, not that they lose love for the other. Not caring about your mate's well being or joy may cause lack of love – but toward you; it does not mean lack of love on your part toward them.

If I make you happy and benefit you and you are attracted to me, I can believe you feel love for me without also expecting or demanding that you seek my well-being or joy or my attraction toward you. You may seek all these things, and generally, you would want to but not because of the definition of what love is. If anything, it is simply a psychological phenomenon that commonly accompanies love. Often one does want to please and benefit one that one likes – is attracted to – but one need not.

Now though I think care and concern for another's well-being and satisfaction are not necessary conditions for love itself to exist, I do think part of what it is to be a good person is to at least take into consideration other people's well-being and satisfaction. And this is particularly true in cases of commitment such as marriage, living together, being engaged, going steady, rearing children, etc. In making commitments, by placing ourselves in special relationships with others, we create and incur special obligations. Apart from some overriding exception or overriding circumstance, one owes one's mate, one's children, and sometimes one's friends more than one owes a stranger. You owe people with whom you are interdependent in various ways, and especially those who have benefitted you (even more especially if you had then allowed them to have sacrificed for your benefit) at your request, more than you owe a stranger. And this is so whether there is love or not.

Being married to someone, being on a date with someone, being the parent of someone, even playing tennis with someone, puts special obligations (again, barring some special circumstances to the contrary) on one to act differently in certain cases from how one might be justified in acting toward a stranger. For example, at a dance it is polite to dance and spend time with your date rather than to ignore them. So to that extent, such relationships do require special actions or special considerations about ethical

behavior which will often appear to involve special concern for the person whether they do or not. And since such relationships as marriage usually involve people in love, it appears that love requires special concern for others, when really it is the obligation or commitment to the specially incurred relationship that requires special considerations. Even a spouse who does not love their mate still has special ethical obligations to that mate (barring overriding circumstances) apart from how little other good or satisfaction there is left in the relationship. Even a date has a general obligation to take home the one they took out, regardless of how disappointing the occasion is.

Fulfillment of obligations does not require care and concern for those one is obligated to; nor does consideration of other people's rights. One need not care about others in some special personal way when one is just considering and caring about how it is right to act – caring about what is the right thing to do.

As to the psychological connection between loving someone and wanting to please and benefit them, I think this is perhaps a general correlation though not a universal nor logically necessary one. I suspect it is more like the kind of general psychological correlations of romantic lovers usually wanting to have sex with each other, usually being happy around each other, grinning around each other, or giving gifts to each other at special occasions. Hence, thinking this is some essential correlation may cause one to feel unloved when one's mate does not do one or all of these things. (People who do not pay much attention to the calendar might forget an anniversary, not because they do not remember the date of the anniversary, or because they are no longer in love, but because they do not even realize that date is upon them. Hence, "forgetting" an anniversary is not a sign of lack of love or of lack of caring.) Because there is a general psychological conjunction or correlation between romantic love and sexual desire, desire for proximity, grinning in each others' company, or present-giving, people

mistakenly sometimes think that such a conjunction is then universal or true by definition.

And furthermore, even when A loves B and is concerned for B's well-being just because A loves B, I suspect that concern is a consequence of A's love for B, not a part of it. Those who hold (I think incorrectly) that love is always accompanied by concern for the partner's well- being, over and above any strictly ethical or humanistic concern, do not have to hold that this is part of the definition of love. In fact, they probably do not. They probably hold that such concern is a natural (psychological) outgrowth of loving another. But being a result, a consequence, or an outgrowth of a condition is not the same as being the condition or a part of its definition. Even if thunder always accompanied lightning, lightning is the flash; thunder is the sound that (sometimes) accompanies it. The day always follows night, and vice versa, but neither is part of the definition of the other.

Hence, even if it were true that there could not be love if there was not concern, it would not follow that concern was a part of love. It could be just a natural consequence of it. Even if lovers always remembered to give birthday presents to their loved ones, giving a birthday present would be a consequence of loving, not part of the definition of loving.

Finally, I think in the kinds of cases where one feels unloved because one's mate would rather be at work, does not grin in your proximity, does not give presents, does not want to have sex, etc., there really is more an element of feeling unloving rather than unloved. One can feel unloving because one has been disappointed by one's partner; but because the disappointment or dissatisfaction seems caused by the other person, one misreads being unloving as being unloved. This is perhaps like believing someone who hurts you (though it may be accidental) is angry with you because you are then angry with them. It is perhaps clearest in the case of a lover's accidentally forgetting your birthday when they have been busy and are not particularly cognizant of dates generally anyway; they may love you very much but you feel they do not because you

are disappointed and hurt and feel less loving toward them at the time.

In contrast, someone who always remembers your birthday with cards or presents, etc. may be just very polite and very efficient or very charming, or may be selfishly courting you without thereby really caring or being concerned about you. In general, the fact that someone behaves correctly does not necessarily mean they have the best motives, and incorrect behavior does not necessarily show bad motives. As I will explain further in discussing ethics, motivation is not always easily identified by behavior. Feelings too are not always accurately discernible from outward appearance and behavior. People make all kinds of errors reading caring or uncaring feelings into other people's external behavior. People take mistakes in work to mean lack of responsibility or conscientiousness; they may just be mistakes. People sometimes mistakenly think counselors and teachers who are simply conscientiously doing their jobs have special (possibly romantic) feelings for them.

Key Takeaways

- Care and concern are less important normally than the effects of one's behavior toward another person. Normally if one had to choose between caring people who are incompetent and competent people who uncaring, one would choose competence over caring. There can be exceptions, but both love and ethics involve far more than just being caring.

Key Terms

- ***Care and concern*** are actions that promote or preserve well-being and satisfaction of another, regardless of whether they are accompanied or brought about by care and concern or not.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What trait is unwarranted if its cause is not something that detracts from the original relationship, but is reasonable if its cause is something that undeservedly detracts from the original relationship or promotes the well-being of the one partner only at the undeserved expense of the other?
- ***Question***: Does meeting obligations require care and concern for people? Does caring and being concerned about other people mean you will be good for them or meet your obligations to them?

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Chapter 19 Love and Marriage

Chapter 19 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Discuss the benefits and burdens that living together can bestow on a loving relationship. While marriage brings various legal rights and responsibilities, there are also considerations that need to be given to the daily strains of living together and to moral rights and responsibilities that law does not necessarily reflect.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to understand more about the the person you really need to marry.

> Contrary to statistical studies, married people probably do not live longer than single people; it just seems longer to them. – anonymous

For most people, the notion of marriage involves mainly the idea of being able to live together legally and being able legally to have sexual intercourse. Marriage is a kind of sanctioned social relationship. However, it is important to remember that marriage is a legal relationship that entails other legal rights (such as next of kin rights), duties, forfeitures, and consequences in general, that may differ from state to state, country to country, and time to time. I do not wish to concern myself with these other consequences except to mention about them, and I will touch only briefly on the sexual aspect. It is the nature of the living together aspect that I am

most interested in here; so many of the ideas will equally pertain to people who are living together without being married.

First, sex: suffice it to say here that a legal right to sexual intercourse is not thereby a blanket moral right. In the section on moral aspects (that is, right- and wrong-making aspects) of sex, considerations are discussed which justify whether sex at a particular time is right or rational or not. For example, if one's spouse is not in the mood or there is some other reason not to have sex, then just being married by itself does not override that reason. Marriage allows sex legally; it does not mandate sex morally. Coercive or forced sexual behavior in marriage may be legally permissible, but it is not thereby morally right.

Living together

I have already mentioned a friend of mine's puzzlement over why people wanted to live together without being married, or why they would want to live together if they were not married. Certainly living in the same house can be economical, efficient, and convenient in many ways, he knew, (you don't have to drive back and forth to see each other, use the telephone to talk with each other, pay two sets of household bills, etc.), but he believed that continually being together without much choice about it was the hardest part of being married.

Certainly, there can be problems. Living alone may sometimes be lonely, but it also allows privacy when the mood or situation warrants. (One can be lonely in marriage or a crowd too, when others do not share the moods or interests one has at the time; one comedienne, Joan Rivers if I remember correctly, once said you have not really known what it was like to be lonely until you have been in bed with her husband. In fact, when all is not well in a relationship, or when the partners are apart for whatever reason, then because one is not totally free to seek other companionship, marriage can sometimes even be lonelier than when one is single or not going with someone.) Privacy in the sense I am speaking of it

is being able to be alone when you want or need to be. Not all the moments of our lives are ones which we wish to share with others. One does not want to have to be well groomed or well-dressed, pretty or handsome, cheerful, serious, appropriately behaved or appropriately conversational all the time; yet one also does not wish to have a loved one endure one's foul moods or unkempt manners and appearance, even if they do not mind. In daily living together you do not always see someone at their best, nor do they see you at yours. Often that does not really matter, but sometimes it does, and privacy would be nice. This may also be true to some extent when you live apart and simply date. But then at least there is the opportunity to prepare yourself mentally, emotionally, and fashionably to be in your partner's company when otherwise you are not feeling quite up to it or are not in the right frame of mind. Dating, as opposed to marriage, tends to allow time for preparation for, and recuperation from, each others' company.

Different people require different amounts of privacy or private time (for example I need to be alone to read, and sometimes to write or just to think) and some couples can work out times of privacy for each mate without making it a time of privation for the other. They may have a place of their own at home where they are not likely to be disturbed – a small den, workshop, or sewing room; one may be able to escape to an office; they may have a second home on the beach, in the mountains, or in the country that can serve as a retreat. As long as each understands the other's need for some private times, as long as one partner is not unfairly neglecting the other, and as long as each can tactfully seek private time without the other thereby feeling neglected, some problems that arise from not having enough time or space for oneself can be avoided.

However, people who want or need some privacy are not always fortunate enough to be able to get it. Not everyone has a room for solitude, a second house, an office of their own at work, or a mate who understands the need for private time; and not everyone has the time to spare from other responsibilities for the privacy they might desire. Children at home can decrease even further the

amount of time (and energy) parents have for each other and for themselves.

Besides just needing some private time, there will be times when you would like to be together but your moods and/or interests conflict; and there will probably be times when one or both of you are unhappy, angry, or disappointed with the other and do not want to interact. One of you may be interested in a sporting event on television when the other wants to have a serious conversation about something; one may have had a melancholy day and be in the mood for viewing deep drama while the other is in a giddy mood and wants to attend a light musical comedy. One may be in the mood for sex; the other, not. One may be wide awake and in the mood for conversation or going out while the other is exhausted and ready to turn in for the night. There are better and worse, and more and less understanding, ways of resolving these differences in moods and desires. I will discuss some of them later in the ethics section. In terms of anger or disappointment, it is amazing how many different things a person can do that can be upsetting if you are not in the frame of mind to find them cute, overlook them, or ignore them. Some days that frame of mind is difficult to attain. In any roommate situation – sibling, college, camp, army, marriage, or whatever – friction can occur over almost anything at any time. One partner is compulsively early for appointments or social engagements; the other late. One believes in scrupulous sanitation; the other lets the cat eat out of their plate at the dinner table. One person seems to always find some reason to be busy with church work, civic tasks, career, or friends when the other feels it is time to spend some time together or with the whole family. One person seems to the other to spend too much time and energy on their mother or father. One partner tampers with, moves, or puts away the other's fragile treasures in a manner that the other does not consider careful enough. Etc., etc. Many of these things are not important when all else in life is well; but unfortunately all else is not always well, and so sometimes even minor irritations can take on monumental proportions to even the most forgiving, tolerant, and patient

partner. And many partners, not being so patient nor forgiving, do not require much cause to become annoyed. Until you live with someone over a period of time, it is difficult to imagine both how many different things about them could please you and how many could irritate you. (I know one man who, when he meets unmarried adults asks them since they are not married what they do for aggravation.)

Differences in mood and disagreements of any sort can arise at any time, particularly when there are outside forces that pressure and provoke one or both of you and that drain your energy, sap your strength, and weaken your ability to cope with minor, even otherwise unnoticeable, irritations. If both partners face such pressures, say at school or at work, chances for at least temporary conflict, irritability, and/or disenchantment may multiply. Some partners or couples can find their homes a haven from external daily problems and can grow even closer in the face of workaday vexations; but others cannot prevent, sometimes even with a sense of resolve and ***commitment***, those outside irritations from intruding into their home lives and undermining or eroding its foundation.

The point of this is that living together, whether legally or not, can be, and too often is, not necessarily as glorious and as unremittingly romantic as some would think, so there are things to consider before marrying or moving in together that are just as important as, and perhaps even more so than, simply considerations of how you feel about each other. Love in terms of feelings may be unconditional, but living together is not. It may be easier to love from a distance than it is to love in unrelenting proximity when you cannot get the distance you need to let loving feelings override the other person's bothersome or bad behavior.

Living together allows for the companionship, closeness, convenience, and spontaneity one wants in a loving relationship, but there are other things in life just as important as (and at times even more important than) convenience, spontaneity, closeness, and sheer physical companionship. Even loving feelings, particularly

when they cause inappropriate jealous behavior or inordinate domineering behavior for the loved one's supposed "own good" (that is, paternalism), cannot overcome all problems and may even contribute to them.

The point when considering marriage or living together – especially if one is planning to make a firm commitment (rather than a trial arrangement of a short term, optionally renewable contract) is to at least ask the question of whether the two of you will be satisfying enough and good enough for each other under such circumstances that the relationship is likely to stay a good one. Apart from sex and romance, just how well will the two of you likely get along as roommates? What kinds of things do you really like to do and what kinds of things do you really hate to have roommates do? If there are differences in life styles, how will you accommodate each other so as to cause the least friction and the least disappointment? Do you see people with different ideas and values as therefore inferior, bad, or weird, or do you just see them as interestingly different? How well are each of you able to say something pleasantly or tactfully about a disturbing matter before it builds into a problem out of proportion that provokes an undeserved attack? (I know of two separate couples who each had a terrible fight over one of the partner's casually changing a dinner seating arrangement in order to better accommodate guests. Their spouses felt slighted and instead of calmly saying they would also like to change their seats so they could remain next to their mates, they took their partner's seat change as a sign of dislike for them, let it fester, and really blew up in anger later, totally surprising their mates who hadn't meant anything at all by the seating rearrangement other than to improve the evening's comfort and companionship for everyone.)

And in terms not just of immediate daily living, but of longer range attraction, satisfaction, and good, it is important to ask, not do you love the other person enough (in terms of feelings alone) to get married now, but are there enough other elements in the relationship to make it likely to stay a satisfying and good

relationship. What kinds of interests, goals, and dreams do you each have that you want to work to achieve? Does your partner share those desires? If not, will they come between you? If so, will you be a help to each other or not? If not, will that matter? Are you at a place in life where you are likely soon to meet someone with whom marriage could be better and more satisfying? Or have you looked around sufficiently to know there is unlikely to be a better mate for you, and are you philosophical enough and comfortable enough with yourself and your partner that, if by chance, someone does show up who might have been a (slightly) more suitable mate for you, you will not have regrets or have to pursue the new relationship at the expense of this one? Is this relationship strong enough and good enough, not just romantic enough, so that even if someone else terrific were to come along, there would be no need to break the commitment to your mate. One may trade in one's car for another that one sees and likes better, but it is not fair to treat people that way. Even if one does not have the perfect marriage, one should not treat one's partner unfairly or be uncommitted to him or her and shopping around for someone better for you. That is to treat people callously as if they had no feelings and required no consideration. And it is to make a mockery of commitment and obligation.

Commitment demands at least the reasonable attempt to make one's marriage better by improving the relationship, not by changing partners. Commitment does not mean keeping a marriage of poor or mediocre quality that resists improvement, but it does, I think, mean not abandoning, or at least not readily abandoning, one above a certain quality just because a potentially better one seems to come along. How high a level the quality of the original marriage should be to maintain it is not easy to say and it depends in part upon whether there are children or others who might be affected, and a great deal on how one's present mate might be effected. It is easy to imagine circumstances in which both would be better off separating or divorcing, but that is a separate issue from the one of just one partner's being better off outside the marriage; one can

understand and sympathize with someone who wants out because a relationship is irreparably detrimental, but there is justifiably little sympathy for a person who hurts his or partner by leaving a good relationship just because he or she thinks they can form a better one. The time to wonder whether you can do better – that is, have a better relationship, more loving feelings, better satisfaction, and be better for each other – with someone else is before you get committed to someone, whether the commitment is marriage, serious living together, becoming engaged, pinned or going steady. These last three are progressively weaker commitments that require progressively less reason to dissolve, but even the last requires some good reason to end, otherwise there is no point to being a part of it in the first place – why go steady if there is no commitment at all involved in it.

Also one must consider whether there is any need or rush to marry or live with someone at all instead of continuing to live alone. One need not compare a present relationship with the probability of some better future one but can compare marrying the present mate with living alone instead. Particularly if one is likely to find a more suitable mate soon enough for one's desires, there would be no need to get involved in a temporary or somewhat undesirable relationship if living alone is not that terrible in the first place. There are plenty of fish in the sea, and though you will not find them all attractive, nor they you, and though not all of them and you will be enjoyable for or good for each other, generally there are sufficient numbers you can meet who you will like, who will like you, and with whom you can have an enduring, satisfactory and good relationship so that you need not take on a commitment you are not certain will be sufficiently romantic, satisfying, and good to want to keep – particularly if living alone is good enough that there is no good reason to take on such a commitment in the first place.

Key Takeaways

- Marriage is a legal relationship that bestows certain rights and obligations which may or may not always coincide with moral ones. And marriage usually has 'roommate' benefits, burdens, joys, disappointments, and strains that can accompany any living together relationship whether involving love or not.

Key Terms

- ***Commitment*** demands at least the reasonable attempt to make one's marriage better by improving the relationship, not by changing partners.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What is marriage?
- ***Question***: What are potential benefits and detriments of living together?

Chapter 20 The Future of a Relationship

Chapter 20 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Express that relationships can change through time and what that signifies about any given time in the relationship.

Watch this video or scan the QR code to see how love can change.

In most of this book, I consider the amount of value, joy, and attraction in a relationship at some particular time. But you can also use these dimensions to think about and analyze likely future trends in a relationship. One can, even in the midst of a powerful attraction, realize that that attraction may (soon) fade or change its form. One may realize that ***present satisfaction*** is due only to temporary circumstances and that when those circumstances change, so probably will the joy the relationship brings. One may fairly well predict in what ways a relationship will get better or worse.

As people mature and acquire knowledge about how they respond to various kinds of situations and conditions, they become better able to predict how their tastes and feelings will likely change even though they do not "feel" at the time that they will change. This is in all areas, not just relationships. Wisdom reminds you how sick you felt the past times you ate a food you now crave, and it teaches you ways to ignore or work around the craving so that you do not give in to it. Wisdom lets you know past strong romantic passions have tended to cloud your reason before and let you get hurt when you

rushed into some areas just on the basis of those feelings, so you tend to pursue your feelings with caution and awareness rather than in just blind faith. Those who learn from experience and from their former mistakes can attain a measure of wisdom; unfortunately learning from mistakes requires making them first.

But there are other ways to learn, sometimes films and literature dramatize in powerful and meaningful ways the mistakes others have made or that anyone could make. Sometimes we see people who set negative examples, and something in us tells us not to emulate them but instead to avoid becoming like them, to avoid making the kinds of mistakes and choices they seem to have made in their lives. Bad examples are often as instructive as good ones; sometimes, more instructive. Sometimes people's own stories will be so vivid that we will learn from them as much as if we had had the experience our self. Sometimes we can extrapolate knowledge gleaned from our own limited experiences to those we have not yet had. For example, if you have ever kissed someone, not because you really liked them or really wanted to kiss them, but because you were experimenting to see what it was like, and if you found that kissing with just that motivation was quite dissatisfying and not anywhere near as pleasant as kissing someone you really like or really want to kiss, you will probably be less likely to experiment, just for the sake of experimenting, with more involved physically or sexually intimate behavior.

It is very important for people to know that they might be affected by changes in their circumstances, so that they can minimize those changes or the undesirable consequences of those changes as much as possible. For example, two teenagers who love each other (make each other happy, are good for each other now, and who are attracted to each other) may realize that many people whose marriages did not long survive were once in the exact same situation as they are now. They may realize that their love may not survive taking on family, financial, and employment obligations they have never really had before. This may give them serious concern

about having a child right away, even though they may want to. They may want to marry but to wait until later to have a child. Others may want to postpone marriage altogether until their lives have taken on more familiar and predictable patterns in a more stable environment, or at least until they know they are flexible and capable enough to be likely to handle negative surprises in positive ways. This will not, of course, guaranty success, but it gives it a more reasonable chance.

It is also important for people to realize that since relationships often change through time, particularly through changing environment and changing needs, changing desires and half-desires, changing feelings, etc. that they may someday not love each other the way they do now, if at all; but that growing "out" of love or losing love for each other does not then mean there never was any love. People seem to think that real love lasts forever so that whatever does not last forever must not have been real love. But I think this is not true. There are too many cases where one can see objectively how circumstances changed in such a way that it would be very unlikely for a relationship to remain satisfying or good – a company relocation to an area where a spouse may be most lonely, unhappy, and unable to cope, particularly if the mate transferred has been promoted to a job that requires an inordinate amount of work away from home; important career changes that take spouses away from each other for too long periods of time; educational growth of one or both spouses that make their interests so divergent it is difficult for them to become very involved in areas of (particular) importance to each other; drastic personality changes in one person due to alcoholism, financial loss, war experiences, business experiences, the influence of new friends, or whatever changes that are unable to be resolved. There are all kinds of forces at work that can weaken or destroy an otherwise flawless relationship, particularly when the people involved have no idea those forces are acting upon them. And there are too many similar situations where the same kinds of forces help destroy the same

kinds of relationships for it to be just accident or an indication that there was no love, or insufficient love, in the first place.

Therefore, though people whose relationships fail may be hurt or angry, they should not necessarily also think the whole relationship has been a sham, a farce, or a lie, or that their partner has never loved them. Because a relationship does not retain sufficient attraction, joy, or good for it to remain an active or viable partnership, that does not mean that it never had enough to be one, and that it never, in fact, was one.

And similarly, just because adults may have every reason to believe that teenage love will not weather enough external changes to last as their children go to college, take on jobs, move to new environments and make new friends, that is no reason to hold the teenagers do not now love each other. They may be quite suited to each other now – quite attracted, quite satisfying, and quite good for each other – in their environment, at their level of maturity, and with their particular present interests and abilities. Parents need to understand it would most likely be unproductive, ill-advised, and misunderstood (and I think incorrect) to tell a child he or she is not really in love or that he or she should not be so serious yet or for this person. Rather they should realize how satisfying, good, and emotionally strong the relationship may be and only seek to help their children realize it is likely or possible to change as the partners mature and their circumstances, environment, abilities, and responsibilities change. Further, they want to try to ensure that behavior is appropriate to the stage of the relationship and the maturity level of the partners by at least making certain the children understand what is appropriate and why, and by making certain the children understand feelings for each other alone are not what determine the correctness of their behavior toward each other. This is, of course, in regard to sex that risks pregnancy and future heartbreak, but it is also in regard to things like sacrificing college (where college is more appropriate) in order to support the partner through law school or some such.

Now knowledge about the future can affect the present, and in different ways. One person expecting to face a severe crisis may be unperturbed by otherwise intruding minor annoyances; another may find those intrusions to be tremendous additional aggravations. Nothing else in the morning may bother a person sentenced to the gallows for that afternoon; but, on the other hand, few people would be able to enjoy the freefall from a plane if they had no parachute or knew their chute would not open. Knowing or believing a relationship likely to be impermanent may make it more important and enjoyable at the time or may spoil or ruin it altogether. Impending disaster can spoil the present or make its pleasures that much more intense and more valuable.

Also, some publicized prophecies (like "bank Z will fail", or "the rate of inflation will increase") are self- fulfilling; others (like predicting overcrowded dorms next year, before people have chosen their colleges or residences), are self- defeating; and still others (such as horse race predictions) have no effect on the outcome at all. Predicting or thinking about the future of a relationship may or may not alter how that relationship will actually turn out, but I suspect that more often than not foresight, preparation, precaution, and planning would make more people much happier and better off than reflex reaction to circumstance, feelings, and unexpected accident. Though in some cases dire predictions are self-fulfilling, in many cases they may make possible sufficient preparation and response to render them false.

In some cases, it seems to me it is not too much information or too much understanding of the probability of the future, but the uncertainty or unpredictability of the future, that makes life's decisions more difficult. One might justifiably delay a gratification that has some personal risk to one's future, whereas if one knew there was not going to be much future for them, one probably would justifiably not delay such gratification. Sometimes a relationship that is known by both people about to end – say one person is moving away, or dying – may be more intense, less superficial, more loving than one which seems to have no near end. With

relationships, as with life in general, there would probably be fewer difficult problems and decisions if we knew whether there would be no tomorrow or infinite tomorrows, or if we knew just exactly how many tomorrows there would be. Fortunately or unfortunately, however, we have to both plan for the future and plan for the possibility of there being no or little future.

That is sometimes difficult, for how we would and should act if there were no or little future is often quite different from how we should act if there were an assured long future. And it is particularly difficult, I think, for children and teenagers, because without the self-knowledge that can come with experience they sometimes have too little patience (feeling like the future may never arrive or that it takes too long to arrive) and sometimes have too much patience (for procrastination) because they feel there will always be time to do the things they need to do.

Key Takeaways

- Changes through time which decrease or end love, do not mean it did not exist at the time it was perceived. Oppositely, but not as problematic or perhaps even interesting, the flowering of a relationship into love does not mean love existed from the beginning. The general framework of love as attraction, satisfaction, and goodness (and their opposites) helps make understanding the nature of changes over time easier and can put them into perspective, both in regard to past actual changes and future potential ones.

Key Terms

- One may realize that ***present satisfaction*** is due only to temporary circumstances and that when those circumstances change, so to, may the joy the relationship brings.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question:*** Do relationships change as people mature and acquire knowledge about how they respond to various kinds of situations and conditions?
- ***Question***: Does predicting or thinking about the future of a relationship affect how that relationship will actually turn out?

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Chapter 21 Love and Change and Rational Prediction

Chapter 21 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Identify the factors that cause changes in a relationship, the likelihood of their occurrence, and possible ways to overcome or prevent their being problematic.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to see how couples can grow apart.

There are people who change very little in their desires, interests, and abilities as they grow older, many people do change, and some, quite substantially. The problem is how to select a mate that will change in ways that are likely to be beneficial or at least undamaging to the relationship, instead of detrimental to it.

In one Ben Casey episode a shy, serious female rehabilitation physician falls in love with a Don Juan type doctor who had just become handicapped and who has fallen in love with her while he is in her care. But she is hesitant to get involved with him; she told him she was afraid about the future of their relationship. Would their relationship work, particularly when he was no longer so dependent on her, and particularly in light of his past romantic penchant for temporary affairs. His reply was, "Only manufacturers give guarantees."

To some extent this is true; there are no guarantees. But there are some risks that are not as great as others; there are some risks that are far more reasonable than others. People whose circumstances are likely to change in the future are also people whose

characteristics are likely to change in the future. If one partner quits school to support the other's educational pursuits, it is likely (but not inevitable, of course, if they work at it) for a gap to appear between them in their interests and abilities. What is important or interesting to them now might change. What they think about, how they think about it, and at what level may all change, as might their friends, the types of friends they seek, etc. Likewise when people graduate from high school and go to college, the army, or to a new job. Or when people graduate from college to begin a new job or career. There are certain stages that people go through in their lives that tend to be more likely than others to bring changes in them. And without some sort of conscious and considerable effort, the more likely people are then to grow apart in terms of satisfactions, benefits, or even attraction, from a mate or loved one. Conversely, the less likely it is a couple's environment will change, the less likely they are to change (drastically) and grow apart from each other. Hence, marriage before much life experience or before career is permanently under way is riskier in general than marriage afterward.

Reasonably stable environments and circumstances can help relationships remain stable. By reasonably stable environments I do not mean ones that are monotonous, stagnating, and unchanging, but ones that do not make the kinds of drastic changes that would be difficult for almost anyone to cope with and adjust to. Love "on the rebound" is basically love, not whose genuineness, but whose stability, is particularly in question because it occurs under psychological conditions (such as rejection, disappointment, anger, sorrow, sadness, loneliness, depression, lack of confidence in one's own judgment and/or desirability etc.) that are likely to change, particularly as time and the new love help overcome those conditions. Hence, love on the rebound needs – that is, those conditions need – to be waited out and seen not to be the primary and necessary cause of the love (attraction, joy, and benefit) before long term obligations founded on love – such as living together,

marrying, combining property and other financial assets, or parenting – are incurred.

It seems to me there are ways to reduce the risk of growing apart even when one or both partners are going through, or are likely to go through, circumstances that tend to provoke change. First, I think there are general sorts of traits which tend to change less than more specific ones. For example, if one is interested in intellectual pursuits, one may pursue different, specific intellectual interests such as chess, computer programming, music theory, anthropology, or the geometry of Rubik's cubes. The particular interests may change but the general interest in intellectual pursuits may remain. Periodically, of course, we hear stories about people who give up baseball careers to become geophysicists or who give up teaching philosophy to become non-reading surfers. But I suspect these more drastic kinds of changes are rather rare and certainly less likely than the less drastic kind of changes of specific interests in the same kind of areas. The person who is interested then in intellectual pursuits is more likely to be able to introduce particular new ones to a loved one who is, in general, also interested in intellectual pursuits than to one who is not generally intellectually motivated. Similarly with regard to athletic couples where one partner becomes interested in a new particular sport or training program. Hence, it seems to me that risk of growing apart is somewhat lessened when both partners have general characteristics or general areas of interest that satisfy and are good for each other, rather than just specific or narrow interests. For example, one plays tennis because he or she likes anything athletic and the other plays tennis because it is the only sport or athletic activity he or she likes. If the latter becomes tired of tennis or has to give it up, there may not be any other sport they can happily play together, and that might be an important gap in their relationship.

Further, I would think it would be a great help if both are good teachers or inciters of enthusiasm about their new interests for each other and if both are willing to learn about the others' new

interests. This does not mean that one needs to learn how to play chess, necessarily, but that one may take delight in learning enough about chess to find out there are puzzle books, anecdote books, etc. to get from the library or a bookstore to give further pleasure to the one who has learned how to play even if the two of you do not play together. Or the second may ask questions of the first to show a certain interest, if not mastery, of the game. If, of two sports enthusiasts, one learns to snow ski, he or she may be able to teach the other in a very accessible, fun way so that soon the other can be able to ski well enough so that they can do it together. Or, also in terms of sports, one may take up golf and the other tennis – but they can join the same club that offers both, meet each other's' friends, share in conversation about each other's experiences, and be able to understand and appreciate what their different but similar experiences (such as coming from behind to win under pressure, or the challenge of facing a much more skilled opponent) have in common and mean to each other. One can learn about oneself in playing a sport, and a golfer and tennis player who are interested in each other as people might be able to share that it felt the same to choke a crucial serve as to choke a crucial putt; and one might be able to teach the other how he or she has been able to overcome choking like that.

Something like this is also true of school or different jobs. With enthusiastic and interested communication, one can learn a great deal about how and why the new experiences or courses are important and exciting to the other person, and can learn and grow along with them. But it requires one who is able to tell interestingly about the experiences and their effects, and another who is able to listen with interest and enthusiasm.

Risk of "growing apart" can also be reduced when it is not so much general or all particular interests that help each enjoy the other, but certain particularly psychologically important interests that are not likely to change, regardless of which particular other areas do change. It is conceivable for two people to marry who

have very few common areas of enjoyment and benefit but who treat each other well and kindly and who spend enough time and space together doing what they particularly like to do together that the things they do apart do not impede or basically influence the relationship. Perhaps both have separate careers, both like different people with whom they are able to sufficiently discuss areas that are of no interest to their mates, and both have enough time to devote to the things they alone are interested in, but they are quite comfortable with each other when together and have enough in the relationship that the changes in areas outside the relationship do not affect how they treat or satisfy each other. Each may expect the other to change and mature along with her/himself, but not in the necessarily the same way or same areas. Each might respect, like, encourage, and strengthen the other enough, and they might have sufficient joy and good together in especially important areas that they can share their lives, and satisfy and truly (not just apparently or shallowly) benefit each other without being passionately or deeply involved with all or many of each others' particular, but less meaningful, interests.

Key Takeaways

- There are variables that can stress or bring harm to a love relationship over time, and some are more predictable and perhaps more avoidable than others.

Key Terms

- ***Reasonably stable environments*** and circumstances can help relationships remain stable. Reasonably stable environments do not mean ones that are monotonous, stagnating, and unchanging, but instead, refer to environments without drastic changes that would be difficult for almost anyone to cope with and adjust to.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What are some factors which can jeopardize the stability of a relationship which has been functioning well?
- ***Question***: How can the risk of "growing apart" be reduced?

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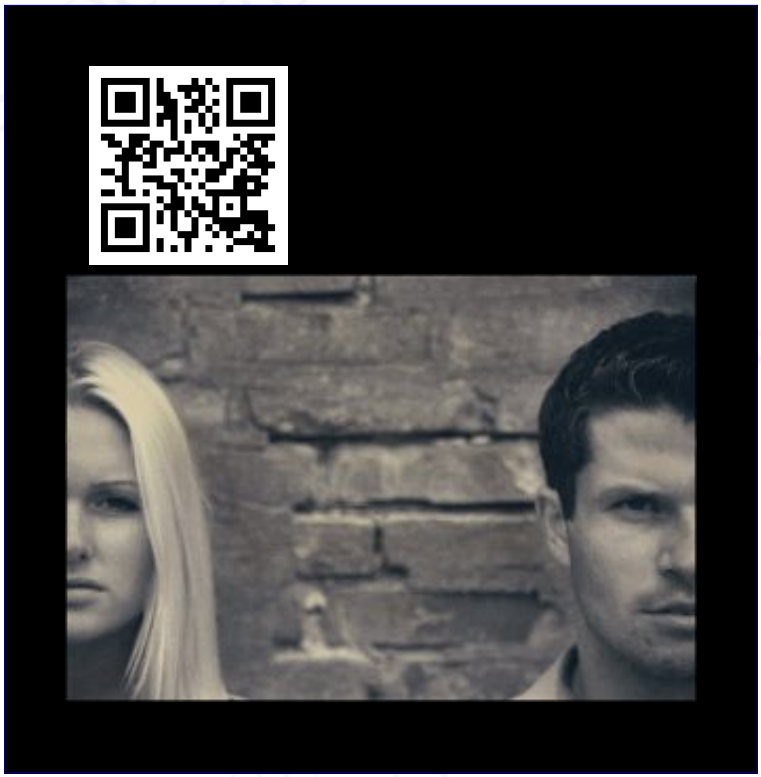
Chapter 22 Jealousy

Chapter 22 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Summarize the differences between rational jealousy and irrational jealousy.



Watch this video or scan the QR code to see how you can deal with jealousy.

I think there are two types of jealousy or at least two different kinds of conditions under which it occurs. One sort is rational and justified; the other, not, though it is at least as powerful, probably even more so, and is certainly very devastating when it occurs.

The first type of jealousy, jealousy for a good reason, is that jealousy over someone's unfairly depriving you of the joys and benefits you should have with your partner. If a man, for example, talks his wife into accompanying him on a business trip she would rather not go on, and then spends his free time with other people, ignoring her and letting her be miserable, she has a right to be disappointed and angry, as well as jealous of whoever monopolizes her husband's time.

Similarly, if a parent spends an unwarranted amount of time with one child at the expense of another (roughly equating quality and quantity of time here just for the sake of discussion), it seems justified that the neglected child should feel hurt and jealous.

This is not to imply that a man is always responsible for his wife's entertainment or well-being, nor that a parent is always responsible for his child's entertainment. However, there are some times and some situations where one does have an obligation to spend time with one's spouse or one's children. And when such an obligation is inexcusably not met, the partner or child being neglected has a right to be disappointed, hurt, or jealous of whoever is taking up the parent's or partner's time.

Alienation of affection or alienation of the amount of good or satisfaction or energy spent with a partner also can arouse justifiable jealousy. If a woman, for example, will not go with her husband to a movie she already knew he wanted to see with her

because she saw it instead with a friend, then the husband has a right to be jealous of the friend – even though the wife and friend went at a time that the husband could not have gone anyway. The wife and friend were not thereby taking the wife's time away from her husband, but they were taking away from him an enjoyment – one in this case that arguably should have been his. Likewise, even if a new relationship were to take no time away from an old relationship, but were to ruin it because the person involved in both relationships only had the energy or the character to treat one (the new) partner nicely, the old partner would have a right to be jealous. (This is if he or she were not a contributing factor to this alienation or a deserving beneficiary of it by, say, having treated the alienated partner unfairly, causing most of the alienation him or her self.)

The kind of jealousy that is often so miserably debilitating though, and irrational, is the sort by a partner that would deny a loved one happiness or benefit from another which in no way would impinge upon their relationship with that partner. The only remotely rational element to this kind of jealousy is the concern that such a relationship might later become one that so impinges; but insofar as it is not likely to later and does not now, jealousy of it is irrational. To call this kind of jealousy insane jealousy is in some cases simultaneously to describe the cause and the behavior it prompts.

There are perhaps two reasons or causes, both unjustified, for a person's being jealous over the happiness another brings his or her partner – happiness that in no way (besides the irrational jealousy it provokes) detrimentally affects the first relationship: (1) the false belief that there is one and only one person "perfect" for each of us so that if anyone else is good for our love, we must not be, and (2) the virtually unfulfillable desire to be all things to a loved one, their one and only source of happiness and benefit. We see this latter sometimes in a husband who is jealous of wealthier parents-in-law who provide things for their daughter that he cannot afford to give her, or of a wife who is jealous of someone (such as her mother-in-law) whose cooking her husband raves about. We hear it implied in the lament of a person whose partner cheated on them that they

must have done something wrong to the cheating partner, for if they had made the cheater happy in the first place, the cheater would not have had to look and go elsewhere for satisfaction. (This is not necessarily true. The cheater may have been happy at home – as well as happy where he or she was cheating.)

Concerning (1) above, it simply seems false to me that there is only one right person for each of us. We find love too often when we are looking for it (after breaking up, after divorce, while we are in college, etc., etc.) for it to be so rare. If there were just one person who would be one's ideal mate, it seems to me that it would be highly unlikely anyone would ever find their love or ideal mate. Yet many people are happily married or happily living together or happily going together. And each of them could probably be just as happy with many, many others, had they met them instead, or had they met them first. That your partner finds someone else who can make her or him happy in some way or other should not be terribly surprising; if it in no way harms or even affects your relationship (apart from your jealousy), it should not be particularly annoying.

Concerning (2), it is practically impossible for any one person to be the sole joy or entertainment for someone else, satisfying all their wants or desires, unless the partner has only the simple desires of a puppy or a pet rock. The interests of most alert, educated, active people are simply too diverse and numerous to expect them all to be satisfiable by any one other person – a person whose areas of interest and competence mesh in just the right way so that both parties benefit and satisfy each other with no need or desire remaining for the joys others can provide.

Further, I doubt most people even want to have daily 24 hour companionship with their loved ones; people often want to be alone for time to themselves, and sometimes they want to be with other people for variety, change of pace, learning new things, getting new perspectives, or even to talk (or complain) about their partner. In general, we simply depend on a number of different relationships and different sorts of relationships as we go through life. It is rare

and highly unlikely that any two people can provide each other with all the joy and benefit either of them would ever need or want.

In an interesting and apocryphal movie, *Le Bon Heur* in the late 1960's, the main character is fairly happily married, but he also falls in love with a second woman with whom he maintains a clandestine and happy affair for a long period of time, most of it during the day when the man is supposedly at work. He is not taking time away from his wife (though I cannot recall how he was able to get quite as much work done to make a living as he needed to). He is supremely happy both with his wife and with his new lover. Because of this happiness, he seems to have unleashed new resources of energy in all aspects of his life, including his marriage. He goes home happier, is far more attentive to his wife and children, somehow becomes even a better lover to his wife, and just, in general, is a better husband, father, and person. One day on a family picnic his wife tells him how happy he has made her (during what is this span of time since he has also been in love with the other woman), how he seems to have been transformed into so much better a husband than he ever was before and that she could have ever hoped to have married. Unable to contain his joy and enthusiasm any longer, he tells her the secret, believing, of course, that since she has recognized and just told him how good this makes things for everyone concerned, she will understand, accept, and even appreciate the situation. Of course, instead, she is devastated, becomes practically catatonic as she sees her whole life and happiness being taken from her in one brief announcement. She walks off in a grief-stricken trance and drowns (herself).

The reaction he expected her to have was unrealistic; her actual reaction was quite realistic and natural. Yet somehow, in the context of the film, his expectation seems the rational one, and her reaction, the irrational one. Jealousy in a case like this, if there could be such a case, is quite puzzling in that it seems at once unreasonable and unavoidable. Had he had (and been through with) his affair before he met his wife and become the kind of husband she adored because of it, she probably would not have minded the affair at all. We generally

seem not to mind (though some people do) that one has been in love before they loved us. But we don't want them to fall or be in love with someone else, once or while they love us. In the movie *Bus Stop* the female protagonist feels she should tell the man who loves her about her sordid past.

He loves her and has unabashedly courted her and she has begun to fall in love with him. She feels she should be honest with him though she is very ashamed of her past and embarrassed about it. It is very difficult for her to talk about the subject, but she feels he has a right to know. She wants to confess about her past to him and it is obvious to him that this is very difficult and painful for her. In one of the more poignant and memorable moments in the history of film, he stops her from confessing anything to him about her past that she is ashamed of, and simply says to her that he is just grateful for how she is, so he does not need to know, and cannot complain about, how she got that way. Regardless of how fictitious the story, the audience's reaction at this point is warmly sympathetic and natural – one is not inclined to feel this guy is a fool and that she is a worthless tramp that he should abandon and forget.

In real life, most people do not tend to be particularly jealous of their partner's past loves, only ones that appear during or after their own. This is, of course, only when old ghosts are laid to rest and old flames are not rekindled (some people need reassurance that, as the song goes, old flames can't hold a candle to them). People tend not to take kindly to being compared to their partner's ex-loves, and often people get very jealous when old (and known to be dear) flames reappear.

Now, I have not mentioned sex in particular in regard to jealousy, since sex is not the only consideration for jealousy, and in some cases is not a factor in jealousy at all, even when one's love is known to be engaging in sex with someone else. Jealousy can be over a loved one's work that takes time away from a partner; it can be over a partner's taking someone to lunch while his mate has to work; it can be over a partner's having too animated a conversation

with someone else at a party, particularly when he or she was not having so animated a conversation with the jealous partner earlier. It can arise because a loved one helped someone a little too willingly (particularly if the jealous partner thinks the beneficiary was attractive) or because the loved one accepted help a little too readily from the other person. Ex-wives and ex-husbands, even those who were the ones who wanted and initiated the divorce, often find themselves terribly jealous when their ex-spouse remarries, even though they do not want the spouse themselves. And in one such case, the ex-wife was particularly jealous and upset, not because of the sexual aspect of the relationship of the former husband with his new wife, but because he now did the kinds of things graciously with his new wife that he would only do grudgingly, if at all, with his former wife. He bought and wore the kinds of clothes now that she had always futilely wanted him to; he happily went to parties where he was a sociable guest and helped entertain people at home, etc. He seemed to willingly do for (and with) his new wife all the kinds of things he had avoided or had done unwillingly for his ex-wife. It is often nice to have a relationship with someone who has been "broken in" the right way by someone else, but it is rather hurtfully disappointing to have been the one doing the "breaking in" only to have someone else reap the benefits of your work and aggravation at making your (ex-)spouse receptive to your way of doing things.

My contention that continued and acknowledged sex outside of a relationship is in some cases not cause for jealousy is supported by the fact that in the case of extra-marital romances (or extra-relationship romances) the new lover is hardly ever bothered by the fact that his or her partner still has sex with their spouse (or old partner). At least not while the (old) relationship is still in force; a new lover might become jealous if his or her mate continues to have sex with her or his former partner after divorcing the former partner.

Rape also is not sex that would make the rape victim's spouse

jealous; though seduction would. It seems that as long as the spouse or love is not totally happy or willing about the sexual act, there is no jealousy. Jealousy tends to arise, whether in a sexual context or not, when the spouse or lover enters willingly or joyfully or voluntarily into the action.

The reported cases where even this is not a cause for jealousy, even with sex, are occurrences of mate- swapping, threesomes, and orgies where both members of the relationship knowingly and willingly, and perhaps simultaneously, allow and experience sexual relations with others. Jealousy though sometimes occurs in such situations, particularly where one of the partners seems to enjoy the experience much more than the other does. But since seemingly relatively few people participate in orgies or mate-swapping and since it is not really clear how much this enhances or does not harm their relationships, I do not really want to put too much store in this particular behavior as evidence about extra-relationship sex not necessarily being a cause of jealousy.

Now jealousy, in general, is very often difficult to distinguish, as a feeling, from feeling hurt or disappointed or left out and/or angry over your partner's having been cheating on you, particularly when you feel such cheating has also caused them to treat you badly in ways other than just deceiving you. Some may want to call what I have labeled as justified or rational jealousy instead justified disappointment and/or anger at another's cheating on you and robbing you of the time, energy, enjoyment, or benefit you deserve. Whatever kind of analytic, verbal, or ethical distinctions may be made between such feelings, or the cases that prompt them, it will be difficult or impossible to feel these distinctions psychologically in order to tell whether one is feeling hurt, disappointed, jealous, or all of the above. It is often difficult to tell whether you feel irrationally jealous or whether you feel the way you do because you are sure your love is now treating you in some undeserved second- class way because of his relationship with the object of your jealousy. You may also feel your partner is making

a mistake and has made a terrible choice of new partner, or that may just be sour grapes; it will be hard to tell. It would be fair to be upset and disappointed if you were being treated second-class – if you were being taken advantage of and being treated rudely or unlovingly (in the sense of inconsiderately) just because your partner now put his or her affections, time, and energy elsewhere while "dangling" you. But sometimes one might believe they are feeling such justified disappointment and anger when actually they have not been mistreated at all and are only feeling some sort of anger and disappointment over hurt pride and having been deceived (though the affair itself did not hurt them).

Irrational jealousy and justifiably feeling wronged are not the only kinds of feelings people can have that are difficult to distinguish internally from their "feel". I have already mentioned the case of being unable to distinguish between feeling fear of getting caught and feeling guilty about doing something. And as with irrational jealousy and rational jealousy, these two feelings have vast difference in their logic – in what they refer to or mean. To ***feel guilty*** is to feel you have intentionally done something wrong with no excuse and to regret having done it, whereas ***feeling fear of being caught*** may have nothing to do with your feeling you are doing anything wrong nor with remorse, but may have to do simply with fear that others who might discover you would disapprove and invoke a penalty or humiliation for your action. These two feelings, if they can be distinguished in how they feel, can sometimes only be so distinguished after being caught or after a period of time of not being caught. If you still have the feeling either (1) after you have been caught and treated the way you feared, or not treated badly at all, or (2) when, after a period in which you have not been caught, you finally feel secure that you will not be discovered, then probably guilt is what you felt and feel. If, however, you do not feel badly after being caught or after feeling safe, then probably your bad feeling was just fear of being caught rather than guilt.

[Sometimes we speak of guilt concerning acts we did that we believe

were right but that we believe others would disapprove of or believe wrong. And though the feeling might be the same as the feeling of guilt, it is not the feeling of guilt; you cannot feel guilty if you are doing what you feel is not wrong, you can only feel just like you feel when you feel guilty. Of course, it is easier to just say you feel guilty for having (ignored your mother's erroneous preaching, or whatever) than to say you feel like you feel guilty. But it is not really a feeling of guilt since you do not feel you have done anything wrong.]

There are a number of feelings, difficult to distinguish internally from just their feel, that arise from logically different causes and that rationally involve logically different responses. Rational and irrational jealousy are just two of them, and it is better in their case generally to try to figure out just what you feel and why before you angrily denounce an innocent spouse for a disappointment which you strongly feel as a wrong but that is not really justified by his or her behavior. I would think it would be more productive to begin a conversation talking about how you feel jealous, hurt, left out, or unappreciated rather than how your partner has hurt you, unless you have conclusive reason to believe you have been wronged. Starting off a discussion by angrily accusing someone of wrongdoing on the basis of a feeling, particularly one that may not be what you think it is, could do much more damage to the relationship than good. And if you find out for certain that you have a right to be angry and rationally jealous, you can always then make that point, even vehemently if that would be better.

Key Takeaways

- Rational jealousy is justified resentment, disappointment, and hurt of someone else's depriving

one of the joys and benefits one should have with one's partner, by the other person's having or giving the partner those joys or benefits instead. Irrational jealousy is resentment of anyone's benefiting your loved one in a way or under circumstances which you could not benefit them anyway and which does not take anything away from you.

Key Terms

- To ***feel guilty*** in a relationship is to feel you have intentionally done something wrong with no excuse and to regret having done it.
- ***Feeling fear of being caught*** may have nothing to do with your feeling you are doing anything wrong nor with remorse, but may have to do simply with fear that others who might discover you would disapprove and invoke a penalty or humiliation for your action.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What are the conditions in which jealousy occurs?

- ***Question:*** When is jealousy justified?

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Chapter 23 Independence and Sharing

Chapter 23 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Distinguish between the need for a certain level of maturity, independence, and self-fulfillment of each partner in a relationship for it to thrive rather than being a mutually dependent kind of relationship.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to view ways to be independent in a relationship.

Let there be spaces in your togetherness,

And let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another, but make not a bond of love:

Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.

Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.

Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,

Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For Only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together yet not too near together: For the pillars of the temple stand apart,

And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

from *The Prophet* – Kahlil Gibran (1923)

I have already claimed that it is generally better for both partners in a love or marriage relationship to be fully functioning, capable, independent people for the reason that if one dies or is incapacitated, the other should not then also have to be incapacitated. Grief does not entail prolonged incapacitation. "Some grief shows much of love, but much of grief shows still some want of wit." – from Romeo and Juliet. Further, I stated that people should be independent so that they do not waste whatever potential for good they, as human beings, might be capable of fulfilling. The ads on television say that a mind is a terrible thing to waste. That is true, but so are other potential qualities toward the good – artistic ability, athletic ability, development in matters of taste and appreciation, etc. I sometimes wonder how many people, particularly women, with the potential to have been like Bach, Einstein, or da Vinci are now living or have anonymously lived and died without being able to develop the talents they were born with and without therefore being able also to make the contribution to civilization they could have, had "civilization" only been kinder and more respectful to them.

But there is a further reason that I think it is important for people to be independent, or capable of independence, from each other; and that is that two whole, fully functioning people can bring far more to

a relationship and to each other (as well as to themselves) than can two dependent "half" people. Two people who share full or "whole" lives and characters, bring to a relationship more than two people who share "half" lives.

Now, of course, in most areas of modern civilization, people are not totally independent of others, not for their food, their plumbing, their transportation, electricity, working materials, their jobs, etc. Nor would that generally be a very efficient and desirable state of affairs. And in the homes, though it may be possible for either to get along perfectly well without the other, still it is easier and more efficient and generally better if tasks are divided and shared reasonably and fairly. I believe in fairly appropriated interdependence and in taking care of each others' deserved needs and reasonable desires, so I am not talking about some remote or hermit-like, Spartan, lonely, ascetic type of independent life style. Rather, I am speaking about being free from an ***incapacitating type of dependence*** where one person is unable to function in some sort of normal way without the other's companionship or direction. And I am also talking about an emotional independence, an independence of the spirit, an independence that allows one to live an active and productive life, developing one's good talents and abilities and one's own interests and happiness as much as possible without being stifled (whether one realizes it or not) because one has to unreasonably submerge one's identity to another, needlessly and unfairly sacrifice one's energy and time to another's undeserved needs, or depend on another's successes, joys, and values for one's own successes, joys, and values. Then the moments you do share together can be ones in which both of you bring things to each other to share – new ideas, new insights, new experiences, new feelings, new creations, and in general simply a vibrant new freshness and vitality that continually expand the foundation and the comfortable old areas of togetherness you now enjoy.

Relationships can easily get into a rut and can get bogged down in the business pursuits of either of you or in tending to wet diapers, runny noses, car-pooling, and keeping up with the latest fashions

and fads. It is perhaps hard enough to avoid that if you try to; it is nearly impossible if you do not. Relationships can be hard to hold on to if there is little stability amidst incessant change, but they can also grow monotonous, brittle, and stale with incessant routine and little change or growth. Independence, where needed, for individual pursuit of growth and achievement by each partner should provide some of the growth for the relationship; commitment and sharing, some of the stability. I say "where needed" because there are some rare couples who can grow best in each others' nearly constant companionship because they each serve as a stimulus and catalyst and as a source of ideas and energy for the other. And by "sharing" I mean with curiosity and enthusiasm and by attentive discussion between both concerning the areas of interest they each have and the areas of growth they each achieve. If two people in a relationship are each contributing exciting and worthwhile things to each other, both can benefit. When either or both are stifled from achieving and contributing, both can suffer, or at least not be as well off as they might be.

This is not to say one must be continually active, creative, reflective or studious; but there is some happy medium, I am sure, between that and never growing or expanding your horizons, or your and your partner's horizons as a couple.

Now when I speak of independence, I am not speaking of sexual independence or licentiousness nor of any sort of unethical dismissal or denial of one's obligations to his or her partner.

And I am definitely not speaking of the kind of financial independence so many people in the 1980's seemed to be needlessly or futilely pursuing, too often at the expense of their relationships and/or their children, often at the expense of their more important talents and abilities, and often even at the expense of a more durable kind of happiness or satisfaction or other things of greater value than money. To work at a job that you really do not need whose only benefit is financial, as so many jobs are, seems to me almost as bad as being a slave to unfair, unaided, and unrelenting

housework and chauffeuring. It is a change of masters without a change of merit. Of course, no one who could afford to do otherwise should have to stay home in order just to do mindless tasks; but going out to do mindless tasks for money is not a significant lifestyle improvement over staying home to do them, particularly if conditions at home could be improved by sharing chores, getting some help, and/or doing things that are worthwhile in between, during, or before or after chores. I read once where Robert Kennedy used to play recordings of Shakespearian works to listen to while he showered. Study of any topic at home with books, audio tapes, or video tapes is fairly easy. Audio tapes are even good to listen to in the car while chauffeuring children or otherwise driving around. If a job has merit above just its money, that is one thing, but if the job is oppressive or prevents the development of your talents and important growth, is of no real value to society, is only a means of redistributing society's wealth, and drains your energy and spirits, then the money hardly makes up for that – unless you absolutely need the money to live and cannot get a better job. If a man or woman works at a socially valueless, oppressive, and stifling job just for some unnecessary additional material gain, then he or she is probably missing many things of higher value, even though in a materialistic and consumer-oriented society they may not be of popular value. To be able to afford the best stereo but unable to have the desire or the time and energy to learn to appreciate good music; to be able to afford distant travels but unable to appreciate different people's customs, civilizations, psychologies, and philosophies and to disparage them because they are not like your own; to be able to build the finest homes that you never get to enjoy; to be able to afford good daycare for your children or the finest schools but not be able to spend time with them yourself and then wonder why they turn out different from you or not the way you wanted – seems to be a misuse of your most valuable resources, your time, energy, and talent. Parents may honestly try to better their children's lives by working hard to be able to buy things the children might like, but the children might benefit far more from their parents' time and

energy than from the money obtained at the expense of that time and energy.

Jobs can take on an undeserved importance just from the time and effort they require, or because they are an improvement over what you were used to, or because you are good at it. But you have to continue to question whether the job is really affording you the kind of life you really want or ought to have, whether it is allowing you to make the kind of contribution to society and/or to your family you ought to be making, and whether there might not be a better job for you or a better means of attaining the life that would be the best you can reasonably achieve.

How sad it is to speak with intelligent people of moderate or better material means who can only speak of money or the (implied) costs of acquisitions and not their more edifying characteristics. It is particularly sad or disappointing because these are the people with the ability, resources, position, and potential leisure to have easily attained some wisdom. After a tremendous performance by a world renowned violinist, invited to help celebrate a city orchestra's 75th anniversary, the only idea the president of one of the orchestra's prominent auxiliary groups would discuss at a post-concert party, and he did that obsessively, was "Do you know how much per minute we had to pay that guy to perform here today?"

And too many such people can only have conversations about the latest resort they visited, their new decor, or their children's or spouse's latest accomplishments. Of course taking a helpful interest in one's family and some deserved pride in their worthwhile accomplishments is a good thing but not at the total sacrifice of self and certainly not for hollow achievements that are just a gain of (additional) money and power for the use of which you have no personally or socially particularly good end.

Finally, in a different vein, a number of people think that love for others must begin with some sort of self-love or self-respect. In the usual context for this sort of claim, love for others seems to mean respect, concern, and decent behavior toward others, not just

some kind of attraction. I suspect this claim is better expressed as advice to be an independent, fully functioning, constantly maturing and developing individual with something to offer both oneself and others in terms of traits and deeds that are good and that are satisfying, with the desire to bring deserving others the benefits and joys one can. Otherwise I do not see the point, for there are many unloving (that is, inconsiderate) persons who respect and love themselves beyond merit and who always give themselves first or sole consideration; and there are some people who have low self-esteem and poor self-image who are yet (and perhaps in some cases because of it) very considerate, kind, competent, loving people with a great deal to offer others.

Key Takeaways

- A loving relationship should generally be between partners who each contribute to enrich the life of the other beyond a normal level one should achieve independently, not a mere symbiotic relationship between two people who cannot function sufficiently either emotionally or practically on their own.
- A love relationship should be a relationship between two 'whole' people, not two 'half people'.

Key Terms

- An ***incapacitating type of dependence*** is where one

person is unable to function in some sort of normal way without the other's companionship or direction.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What are the reasons it is better for both partners in a love or marriage relationship to be fully functioning instead of just mutually dependent on each other?

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Chapter 24 “Meaningful” Relationships

Chapter 24 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain what makes a relationship or an experience ‘meaningful’ as opposed to simply being a good or a love relationship.

Watch this video or scan the QR code to see how you can create more meaningful relationships in the age of technology.

In the 1960's and '70's in particular, many people were looking for what they called "***meaningful***" relationships. I even began writing this book as a short paper trying to analyze "meaningful personal relationships" as the subject, but I think that is a different and perhaps narrower notion than what needs to be covered in talking about love or personal relationships in general. I have come to suspect that people call a relationship a meaningful one when they believe, at the time it occurs, that it is making a somewhat profound and felt difference in their lives by satisfying a felt need or by making some change for the better in a way that is important to them.

The relationship, in order to be meaningful then, does not have to actually make the change; it only has to be believed that it does. And it would not be considered a meaningful relationship, no matter how much change it brought for the better or for more satisfaction, if it were not perceived as doing so. There is in the notion of

meaningfulness, both in regard to relationships and to events (that is, we speak of meaningful events as well as of meaningful relationships) the implication of psychological awareness or belief that something valuable is going on.

It seems a relationship or an event is called meaningful only when it is believed to be for the good. Even the terrible experiences of combat or of being ill or starving or of being shot or of being fired may be called meaningful, but only when it is felt that some greater good (involving, say, greater self-awareness, greater awareness of the good of health, greater appreciation for others less fortunate, greater understanding of personal responsibility or potential, etc.) accrues from the experience. I do not believe I have ever heard anyone describe as meaningful what they perceived as an altogether bad and totally unredeeming experience. And indeed, when someone else describes an experience or relationship as meaningful, the question seems to come to mind immediately as to what (good) they got, or get, out of it. If they could think of no good at all, I think we would be puzzled why they considered it meaningful then.

With regard to the point that the goodness or satisfying features must actually be felt as such at the time, that is because there are many good relationships people have, but at the time, they are not aware how good or just how satisfying they are and thus do not ever refer to them as meaningful. A child may take for granted or even be unaware of the many benefits a parent or teacher, say, provides. As a grown person, he may look back at the benefits and realize that the relationship was good or important but just not apply the term "meaningful" since he or she did not attach to the experience any particularly profound importance at the time. Similarly, a teenager or adult may not appreciate how important a particular relationship is for him at the time he or she has it, but only later. Thus, he or she would not call it meaningful at either time, and only call it important at the later time.

Experiences and relationships can be good or beneficial in

themselves, but they are not meaningful in themselves; to be meaningful, they have to be felt as important at the time to the person having them. Something could happen to one person, at a time he or she is not receptive to it, and not be particularly meaningful; at another time, or to another person, that experience could be very meaningful. Similarly [in] relationships, talking to a stranger may be very meaningful if at that time a person "needs" to talk to an understanding person or needs to feel he or she can make a friend, etc. Otherwise it may not. Becoming romantically attracted to another is much more meaningful, felt to be much more important, at some times and for some people than at other times or for other people. For example, if one has begun to despair of ever finding a(nother) love, it can be much more meaningful to meet one then if one is not particularly concerned or looking. Likewise, finding a chess partner or someone who loves opera or speaks Italian or gives great backrubs, if those are qualities you really would like to find in someone and have not been able to.

In cases where an awareness of importance is present, but later the experience or relationship is felt to have been less good or less significant or less satisfying than thought at the time, we still tend to speak of the relationship or experience, because of the felt significance or change in our lives or attitudes at the time, as having been meaningful, but simply not as good or important as we thought it was at the time.

Key Takeaways

- Experiences and relationships can be good or beneficial in themselves, but they are not meaningful in themselves; to be meaningful, they have to be felt

as important at the time to the person having them.

Key Terms

- ***Meaningful*** applies to experiences or relationships perceived as profoundly important to one at the time by meeting a felt need or by making a felt difference for the better in a way that is important to the person at that time.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What is one way to understand what people are referring to when they speak about "meaningful relationships"?

Chapter 25 Introduction to Ethics

Chapter 25 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Define what ethical terms means
- Discuss the decision procedure should be for determining right and wrong, particularly the roles of logic and of moral sensitivity.
- Argue that ethics is objective even when there is disagreement about what is right or wrong because disagreement does not imply subjectivity.
- Explain the nature of personal responsibility.
- Distinguishing who is to say what is right or wrong.
- Describe the role of intention in making ethical judgments.

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About the Subject of Ethics

This and the next chapter are meant to serve as an introduction to ethics, particularly for those who have never had a good course in it. I believe it is important to have such a section because too many people do not realize what tremendous progress has been made in reflective ethical thought; and they then virtually begin from scratch in their ethical reflections and therefore too often reason from principles which, unknown to them, have been modified, refined, or disproved and abandoned through intense scrutiny and criticism over time. This section is not meant to be a complete summary of the history of ethics, but it is meant to be a readable and understandable introduction to many of those historically

important methods, ideas, and principles that have modern relevance. I believe they will most accurately and readily help you resolve, with reasonable people, most of the kinds of ethical questions, issues, and disagreements that arise today, especially those in everyday life and in relationships.

I think being able to figure out proper values and correct or reasonable moral principles requires certain kinds of moral sensitivity and certain kinds of reasoning or logical ability as well as general knowledge of the physical world. (Knowledge of the physical world is important in order to fully understand about acts and their consequences, which is important, in many cases, in order to know what is right. And it is important for you to be able to accomplish what your principles tell you is right. Principles without knowledge can be misguided or lead to foolhardiness.) I think most people have these traits in various degrees and that each kind of trait can be cultivated and improved with the proper guidance. Unfortunately, such guidance is not always available, and therefore many people are left on their own to develop ethical values and principles. This they do to the extent of their own needs, experiences, abilities, and intellectual interests, but it is a very inefficient (and sometimes impossible) way of learning ethics, just as it would be a very inefficient (and sometimes impossible) way of learning anything.

The sensitivity required for being able to discover and appreciate sound moral values and principles includes being able to understand your own feelings, desires, and needs, and being able to understand those of other people; it includes being able to empathize and sympathize with others, having compassion and kindness, and having some reasonable sense of fairness about how to divide benefits and burdens in a given situation. The necessary logical ability includes being able to see the simpler components (if any) of complex problems, situations, and disputes; it includes being able to see, or to appreciate, the logical consequences and ramifications of ethical principles in order to decide their merit and/or their limits; it includes being able to see the relevant moral aspects of different situations in order to know which principles

ought to apply to them, and being able to see the relevant similarities and relevant differences among different, often complex, situations in order to make certain that moral inconsistencies can be seen and reasonably remedied.

My discussion of ethics will primarily focus on its logical aspects. Sensitivity is usually better developed by actual life experiences with others who have feelings they meaningfully display to us (even with pet animals, as well as with other people) and by the kinds of literary and dramatic depictions that vividly portray such feelings. For example, I think some ethical sensitivity is being developed or cultivated in a child when a parent explains that petting the family dog hard (smacking rather than petting – the way kids usually do the first time) will hurt the dog, and "you don't want to hurt him do you; so just pet him gently like this, and it will feel good to him. See how he loves that!" I saw on the national news one time that one prison system was trying to rehabilitate hardened, vicious criminals by giving them pet parrots to train and keep. The idea was that they would learn to care for the feelings of others by developing caring feelings for their pet. I do not know how that experiment turned out, but my suspicion was that it would help these people develop sensitive feelings for their parrots, but that they would probably kill anyone who touched their bird or said something derogatory about it. (I suspect sensitivity toward other species and toward other people or groups generally needs to be cultivated in a number of different specific situations before it becomes more generally felt, but that is just a hunch on my part; and I am sure it is not true for everyone – some children seem very naturally sensitive toward all people and animals.) Regarding the potential moral sensitivity value of literature and drama, most people have seen some work or other that changed the way they thought about a certain "kind" of person or group of people. I vividly remember my sister just bawling her eyes out as a child at the shabby treatment and heartfelt tears of the ugly duckling before it turned into a swan in Walt Disney's cartoon. I think that cartoon made an impression on her at a time and in a way that gave (or brought out in) her a special sensitivity

toward unpopular or oppressed animals and people. In this section on ethics, however, I will not so much be trying to cultivate moral sensitivity as I will be presupposing it and trying to show how to rationally and rightfully refine, utilize, and channel it.

Though without modern paraphrasing or the added inclusion of more modern examples, much of Plato's works or particular points seem difficult to comprehend. Many of his dialogues I think show the right way to conduct ethics discussions and ethics education – one-to-one or in small groups, questioning the remarks you do not understand or agree with, explaining what needs to be explained, and objectively or logically showing and following the consequences of each other's ideas to see whether those ideas hold up or whether they lead either to logical absurdities or to morally unpalatable conclusions you do not want to maintain.

Of course, one often meets people, like some of the people in Plato's dialogues, who will only stick with such an endeavor for a short time, if at all, or until they see their opinions will not hold up. They take that as a personal affront and find some excuse to terminate the conversation. As portrayed by Plato, however, Socrates was quite willing to be shown new ideas and was not intimidated by the potential of having a belief shown to be false. He could then replace it with the new belief, or simply at least be shown he did not know the answer after all, even if no new answer could replace his previous erroneous one. As he states in the Apology, he believed it better to know your ignorance on a matter than to believe some false or wild answer.

I think much could be learned by using this method of dialogue with others, though it is sometimes difficult to see the consequences of some positions, know alternative positions, or be able to discover the convincing arguments that show where mistakes are being made. And, of course, many people do not really want to pursue the truth or take the time and effort to do it, but just want to state, or to try to convince you, of their opinions. But if you do find someone willing to pursue ideas and truth, there

really is, in a sense, no time limit on that pursuit though there may be limitations of time, energy, concentration, or creativity in any particular discussion period. Some topics need to be continued when these resources can be replenished. In dialogues by the philosopher George Berkeley, one of the characters is unconvinced by the other yet does not know how to respond, so he asks for a day to think about it. This happens to him twice, so the dialogues supposedly take place over a three day period. A couple of times I have resumed a discussion after a year's time when a new idea about an old conversation suddenly crept up on me. One time I even called up a student a year after the course I taught him was over; I had figured out some new reasons to try to show him why some point he held in disagreement with me on one topic was wrong. He still was not convinced; but he was very surprised. In teaching philosophy classes, there were a number of times overnight reflection on a point a student had raised led me to a better or amended answer the next class period. One day in particular, I was so amazed and baffled that virtually my whole class held, as we began to study ethics, a version of a principle no person I had ever met had actually preached, a principle known in the literature as ethical egoism – that (according to my students' version) it was right to do anything you wanted to any time you wanted to, since that was what people did anyway, and since it was the honest thing to do – that I could not really think of anything to say which they could appreciate before the class period mercifully ended. I had already asked about things like whether they thought it was all right to break a date, even for a prom, as the fellow drove up in a rented car and rented tuxedo with his expensive corsage in hand, just because you had changed your mind and didn't feel like going. They said, sure, that would be the honest thing to do; better do that than fake the evening or put energy into trying to psych yourself up for something your heart was not already in. "What about murdering someone else?" "They can try to stop you; and with the possibility of punishment, it would be stupid to murder someone anyway…." Hence, they thought murder was only wrong because it would not really be in the

murderer's self- interest. They had become wedded to their principle and were not about to let counter-examples like that talk them out of it.

That night, a possibly mightier demonstration occurred to me. Maybe their own bad grades would disturb them more than someone else's hypothetical murder. The next class period, I falsely announced, with feigned anger, that since they were obviously not paying careful attention in the course, keeping up with the reading, or being serious in class, I was revoking my promise at the beginning of the term (12 weeks earlier) that there would be no written exams in the course, and I told them they would have a comprehensive two part exam on Monday and Tuesday covering everything in the course. This gave them four days, including the weekend (homecoming weekend by the way) to study. I expected an uproar, but instead they became very passive and only asked which areas would be covered on which days. I told them they were responsible for everything already and that I would not give them any strategy hints. Finally, I had to pry out of them that this was a terrible thing for me to do, that I was a real jerk for doing it, and that it was terribly wrong.

I agreed it was wrong and told them I really was not going to do it and that they could relax since there would be no such exam. That really set them off, not because there was not going to be an exam, but because for nearly an hour I had scared them to death about how terrible it was going to be. They asked why I had done it. I reminded them of their supposed supreme ethical principle, that it was right for anyone, and therefore for me, to do anything they (I) wanted to; and that if they thought that, they had to think it was right for me to give such an exam at such a time; and if they thought it was right for me to do it, they couldn't really hold that if I did it I was being a terrible person or doing an undeservedly rotten thing. A call for a show of hands about how many still wanted to hold the principle showed that all but two of them then immediately abandoned that principle as demonstrably disproved. I hoped future

classroom consideration of alternative principles might persuade the two diehards to later reconsider.

Introductory Remarks About Ethics

Before discussing actual ethical principles and values, I want to deal with some issues that concern ethics and which, when not understood, too often plague, disrupt, and retard ethical inquiry or debate over principles and values. In the remainder of this chapter, I want to try to (1) show that ethics is objective; (2) show how it should be done properly; (3) show that we understand what ethical words like good, bad, right, and wrong mean, though there might be some ambiguities and nuances we need to be careful about with some ethical terms and concepts; (4) show what it means to be responsible for an action; and (5) show that people are, in fact, generally responsible for their actions – perhaps more often than they think or would accept, and certainly more than some psychiatrists and defense attorneys might argue.

First, I want to comment on the objectivity versus the subjectivity or relativity of ethics – the question of whether ethics is just a matter of taste or opinion (subjectivity) or whether there are correct or true answers to whether a given act is right or wrong, regardless of what anyone or everyone might believe about it (objectivity).

I believe that ethical judgments are objective rather than subjective or rather than just matters of relative tastes. The reasons I believe this are the following:

(1) If ethics were subjective, one would not have to search for ethical standards or ethical principles; one could simply dream up the easiest or most pleasant ones to follow, if any. Since there is nothing to discover but your own tastes, why have or develop tastes that make it hard on you?

If you find yourself with a principle that causes you some anguish about how you should act, find a principle that doesn't. But this is not the way one goes about trying to figure out what is right or wrong.

(2)If ethics were not objective, there would be no reason to ever

dispute; it would be like disputing about what the best-tasting vegetable or favorite color is, or ought to be. There would be no reason to say some acts were deplorable or dreadful, that some people were despicable – one would only need to say he did not like those acts or people very much, like one might say he cannot stand the taste of eggs. Such statements would really be more about one's self than they would be about eggs, acts, or other people. If ethics were subjective, then if someone were to aim a gun at your child and start to squeeze the trigger, you might as well say, "I won't like that, but if you would like to shoot, go ahead; I cannot say on any objective grounds that that would be wrong."

(3)If ethics were subjective, there would be no point in trying to improve situations or conditions in the world, for there is no reason to believe you are. in any sense, improving anything – that is making it better; you may be only making them more suitable to your liking or taste. Others may favor the status quo or some different situations. And there would be no reason to think one person's taste is any better, any more an improvement, than another's.

Now to say that ethics is objective is not to say the principles you or I have at any one time are necessarily the right ones, but it is to say that there are some right ones, whether you know what they are or not, or whether anyone knows them or not. This is not unlike mathematics, which is objective: there may be easy problems we can know we have correctly solved, but there may be some cases we are not certain whether we have the right answer, and some we are even certain we haven't the right answer. Sometimes, we may even feel certain we have the right answer and yet be wrong. But that does not mean there is no right answer, or that any opinion is as good as any other. When you are trying to balance your bank statement or reconcile it with the bank's figures, you do not just figure any answer is as good as any other, or that the bank's and your different opinions can both be right, or that it is just a matter of taste. Some theorems and problems in higher mathematics are

very difficult to prove or to solve, but that does not mean there are no proofs or solutions to be discovered.

Of course, there may be more than one right thing to do in a given situation (in mathematics there may be more than one correct way of proving a theorem). In a trivial case, under ordinary circumstances it is right to put on either your left shoe or your right shoe first; there is nothing wrong with putting on either first. Less trivially, if you are not feeling well but are not contagious nor in danger of becoming more seriously ill, and you have a friendly date that is not terribly important for either of you, then it may be right either to keep the date or to break it, if you break it properly. Or it may be right to fight a war or to abstain from fighting if the consequences were equally bad one way or the other, though different, and if there were nothing (such as your breaking a peace treaty) other than consequences to consider in making the proper decision. This does not mean that all situations have more than one correct solution or that no solution could be a bad or wrong one. There are many clear cut cases of one act's being right and its opposite being wrong (clearly it is wrong to torture innocent children simply for the pleasure of the torturer); and the fact that there are some difficult cases to decide, and the fact that there are some cases where many alternatives may be equally justifiable or right, does not alter this.

There are a number of objections to the objectivity of ethics, but these objections are themselves faulty.

1) There is the objection that because different groups or different people behave differently, they have different ethical principles. This is a mistaken conclusion, for it does not follow that because different people behave differently that they have different principles; different people might behave differently while following the same principles, if their circumstances are different. For example, primitive peoples with little food may kill old or ill people who cannot produce and who might make others starve or be less productive if they are cared for, whereas a modern society of plenty

may care for its ill and elderly. Yet both may be following a principle of utilitarianism – that is (stated here in an abbreviated form), to do the greatest good for the greatest number. It is just that the different circumstances in each society might make what is best for the greatest number in one not be what is best for the greatest number in the other. The objection that different behavior implies different ethical principles is like saying that people who bet differently in a poker game are following different principles of gambling at poker.

They may not be; they may have hands of widely different value.

2) There is the objection that different people disagree on ethical principles. This is supposed to imply that they can both be right and therefore, ethics is relative. Surely people sometimes do disagree on ethical principles or ethical values. But people sometimes disagree on which horse will win a race, on the occurrence, causes, or significance of different historical events, on the truth of various scientific theories, on whether their checkbooks balance, and on all kinds of other things. Such disagreement, however, does not mean that they are necessarily both right. In some cases of disagreement, both parties may even be wrong. Two people might argue about which baseball player holds a certain record and both might be wrong because a third player altogether may hold the record. When Archie Bunker is wrong or the Nazis were wrong, their blindness to their wrong does not make them right. Just being believed, popular, or even unanimous does not make a wrong position right.

When someone wants to argue about the relativity of ethics based on the differences primitive peoples may have from modern societies, they perhaps also should then argue the relativity of science or technology since primitive peoples often have different notions (if any) of how things work. Much progress has been made in science, engineering, medicine, art. We do not consider people who are ignorant of such advances, whether they lived in the past or live in the present, as knowledgeable as those who are aware of them. Why should we in ethics? Ethics too has made great advances

in knowledge. Many are aware of them, even though a great many are not. Students in good introductory ethics courses often, in one term, see their own improvement in making ethical distinctions and decisions.

Ethics is not all that difficult to do, but not all ethical principles are as obvious or simple as they might seem at first. But that is not peculiar to ethics or to supposedly subjective matters. There are many, many things in physics, in probability theory, and in geometry that seem very counterintuitive (even when you know they are true), and which most ordinarily intelligent people would probably bet lots of money against being true, even after they thought about it on their own a while. Not everything that is true is obvious or simple. But many of these things can nevertheless be shown to these people to be true and of significant practical value by various kinds of proofs and/or demonstrations. (Some examples: in a group of 25 or more people, the odds are over 50% two of them will have the same birthday – not necessarily being born in the same year, but on the same day of the year; you can usually make five pat poker hands out of 25 randomly dealt cards; a raw egg dropped from a one or two story window (sometimes higher) into a normally lush (that is, reasonably well-kept) lawn will not break, as long as it lands in the grass itself and not on a rock or bare spot; and, if the earth were smooth (no mountains or hills) and you tied a string tightly around it at the equator and then added a one yard long loop in the string, smoothing out the slack all around so that the string would be evenly raised everywhere off the surface of the earth, the string would end up being six inches off the ground around the entire globe.)

Notice too though, that people agreeing on an ethical principle does not thereby demonstrate the objectivity of ethics. Two people agreeing on the wrong answer in either ethics or when adding a column of numbers does not make that answer right. Two people agreeing that chocolate tastes best to them does not make chocolate the objectively best food.

3) It is sometimes argued that without God or religion, ethics

would have no point; and therefore insofar as God or religion is in question, so is ethics. False. As an example, think about the case of avoiding running over a child who runs out into the street in the path of your car. Assume in this case that you easily can avoid the child by, say, slowing down, without any danger of swerving into an innocent bystander, of being fatally rear-ended, or of any such other sort of calamity's occurring. Then it seems it is right to avoid running over the child– not for God's sake (though God may be delighted), but simply for the child's sake. Even the child's mother may be pleased that you did not run over her child, but that, again, is only a relatively small reason or a secondary reason for not hitting it. Or suppose you make a promise to someone about some matter. The point of keeping that promise is not for God, but for the sake of the person to whom you made the promise and who is therefore depending on you to keep it.

If children's lives, keeping one's word, and experiencing innocent and deserved joys – to name just a few things– have value for people, is that not then "having value"? Why should value "to God" be the only or most important value?"

I think that morality would be independent of an existent God anyway. One minister I talked with one time said he thought God could do anything He wanted to since the world was His creation and He could then treat it however He saw fit. Maybe He can,but that does not mean He should any more than a parent should do anything he wants with his child, even though he might be able to. One time I came across an adolescent boy mistreating a cat, and when I told him he shouldn't do that, his reply was that it was his cat and he could rightfully do anything to it he wanted. On the contrary, since it was his cat, he may have had even more responsibility for its well-being than a stranger would. At any rate, he did not have any less. After some discussion involving such logic (and incidentally in this case, also my mention of possibly calling the police, since logic was not this kid's strongest talent), we came to an agreement about how he might better understand his obligation to his cat. In the

Bible, Job was right in questioning the correctness of God's actions toward him, though, of course he never questioned that God had the power to perform those actions. Smite does not make right.

The biblical story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac at God's command is always held up as a shining example of trust and faithful obedience. But shouldn't Abraham have protested to God about His directive, if not for his own feelings about Isaac, at least for the sake of Isaac and for the sake of his beloved Sarah who surely treasured Isaac. Had Abraham actually sacrificed Isaac, as Agamemnon sacrificed his eldest daughter Iphigenia to the Greek God Artemis, would we so highly regard his faithfulness and his loyal obedience to God? And would we have said it was right to do just because God commanded it? I doubt it.

A popular anti-Vietnam war slogan was "Kill a commie for Christ". Its taunting purpose was to challenge the naive holding of the idea espoused by some that it was one's duty as a Christian to participate in the war. The unchristian or un-Christlike sounding taunt was to make people reconsider that claim by making it seem prima facie correct that either Christianity should not condone such a war or that there was something wrong with Christianity if it did.

4) Relativists point out that people always think their own moral principles are the best ones. That is generally true; why else would they have them; why would they have ones they think are not the best! The relativist simply has things backwards if he means to imply that people think their moral principles are the best simply because they have them. Rather, they have them because they think they are the best and think they are correct and true. People do not think the principles are right because they are theirs; they are theirs because they think they are right. Now admittedly, some people do not have very good reasons, though they think they do, for believing their moral principles are the best ones, but nonetheless, they usually would point to some reason or other for thinking they are right and not just think they are right because that is what they happen to believe.

5) Some recent types of relativists, called emotivists, think that ethical judgments or statements are simply expressions of emotion (like saying, "yuck", "phooey", or "hooray", only disguised in the more sophisticated form of statements and paragraphs talking about duties, rights, benefits, saints, etc.). Such expressions would then be neither true nor false, logical nor illogical, correct nor incorrect, probable nor improbable. They would not even be about actions or external values, but only would be a display of our own feelings. Saying something is a very good thing or that a man is a very good man or performed the right act is only the same thing, on their view, as enthusiastically applauding the thing, man, or act. Or it is like licking your lips and salivating over some food that you really like.

Now it may be that ethical judgments are often accompanied by emotions; but they need not be. And even in cases where they are, it is the judgment that logically precedes the emotion, even if it does not actually occur first. If you come upon the grizzly remains of a murder, you may feel revulsion and pronounce the deed a terrible wrong. But it is the belief that a heinous deed was committed and that such a deed is a terrible thing that makes you feel ill. If you found out you had only stumbled onto a movie set with some sophisticated, realistic "horror" props, you would not be so morally indignant whether you remain as nauseated by the sight or not.

In contrast, you might feel a similar kind of revulsion at seeing someone else eat a harmless food you find absolutely repulsive. But if he is enjoying it, you do not call his eating it wrong. We are able to distinguish our feelings from our ethical judgments, though some sort of feelings may accompany an experience that also occasions a judgment.

And in the case of the murder, one might pronounce it wrong even if he feels no particular revulsion concerning it. Likewise, the murder is wrong once it happens and even before it is discovered (if it is ever discovered) even though there is no revulsion about it before it is discovered. The emotion or lack of emotion, of witnesses

or of discoverers, is not what causes the act to be right or wrong. If it were, "happy" pills might make all acts right if we were to take such pills at the sign of the slightest adverse emotion. Or terrible acts would be fine if the perpetrators of evil could better hide the evidence of their deeds so that no one ever discovered foul play and was made uncomfortable by it. But this is absurd. When you say something is wrong or bad, that is different from saying "yuck", even if you might feel like saying "yuck" as well. And even if you do not. In fact, even when you enthusiastically applaud a performance or a person, it is usually because you believe it was a good performance or because you believe they are a deserving person. Applause may not be a logical statement or something that is true or false, but it is (believed to be) deserved or undeserved. We do not just applaud because we have nothing to do with our hands or because we feel like clapping them together for no reason.

There was an older man interviewed by 60 Minutes who had lost his life savings in a bank-type failure that was, it seems, caused in part by mismanagement and embezzlement of funds. He said they had invited everyone to a meeting at which they were told about losing their money and they were introduced to a psychologist who would help them get over it. The man said, "Young man, I don't want you to make me feel good about losing all my money; I want you to give me back all my money." This man recognized that the catastrophe and moral outrage were not about his feelings but about what had happened. His feelings were simply appropriate for what had happened. Changing their feelings would not make morally correct what had been done to the depositors.

6) There are some who hold that ethics is not objective, or as they often say, it is not "absolute" because they point to all the exceptions possible for a rule like "killing is wrong". They point to cases of self-defense or cases of defending innocent third parties from being murdered, etc. So they say that the principle is not absolute and usually seem to mean something like it is not therefore true. These people, however, confuse objectivity with simplicity. To say that ethics is objective or that ethical judgments can be absolute

(I think "true" is a better word than absolute – I am not always really sure what people who keep pointing out that things are not absolute really mean unless it is "true" or "true in all cases") is not to say that ethical judgments need to be simple or short. Nor is it to hold that they must not take into account relevant circumstances.

To say "killing is wrong" may not be correct, but it is not the only absolute, objective, or true statement one could make about killing. Equally objective or absolute is the statement "killing is wrong except in cases of least necessary violence in self-defense where the defender is an innocent party…, and in cases of…," where all the exceptions are spelled out in detail. There is no reason we could not in time discover and list all the kinds of cases that might be wrong for one person to kill another. The statement to that effect then would be the absolute, true, definitive, or objectively correct analysis about the morality of killing.

I would like to say a few words here about the necessity of taking into account situations, since some people are appalled by what they consider to a relativist view that what is right depends on who you are talking about and under what circumstances. They think it is unfair to treat different people differently or to let someone off in one situation that you would not let off in another. First, to say morality is situation- dependent is not to say it is relative or subjective unless you mean simply that it is relative to the circumstances. And circumstances are relevant. A doctor who does not give an infected patient the correct antibiotic he needs to survive may be culpable if he has the antibiotic to give but not if, through no fault of his own, it is not available to him. A man may break a date if his help is needed at an automobile accident; he may not justifiably or excusably do so if there is not that or any other situation that would override his obligation to keep appointments. A clergyman is empowered to marry people who have a license; not everyone can do that. Drunks should not drive, but licensed non-drunks may if they do it correctly. Drivers who cause bad accidents should stay at the scene (barring some special circumstances like

needing to go for help), but other drivers are not necessarily obligated to do so.

I see no way for there to be ethical principles that do not take into account circumstances any more than I see at this time one medical treatment that would be right for all patients regardless of their illness or complaint. This does not mean that some principles are not more general than others (that is, apply to more kinds of circumstances than others) or that there are not some principles (such as it is always wrong to torture children for fun) that apply to everyone all the time. It just means that what is right in some cases depends specifically on what the circumstances of the case are.

How to tell what is right: The question is often asked how one knows when one has the correct ethical principle or knows which act is right or which person is a good one or not. You use knowledge of the particular case and available options, your reasoning powers, and your ethical sensitivity, insights or intuitions (or whatever you want to call your moral understanding); you talk with other people, and read what you can to find out what others believe about an issue and the reasons they give for thinking their views correct. You analyze the situation and try to compare its relevant features with other situations that appear clear cut. Both logical ability and moral sensitivity are important for being able to do ethics well.

Without some moral sensitivity, even the simplest cases would not make apparent an obvious solution or correct course of action; some people, for example, who assault and/or murder innocent strangers for no reason and with no compunction or regret seem to me to be people who have no sense of morality concerning the value of innocent life at all. Whether one could be developed in them or not, I am not certain. Some quite young children are very sensitive to the pain or sorrow of other people; some are less so. As they mature, some people seem to grow more sensitive to the suffering of others; some, less. And I am not speaking about the amount of knowledge or awareness of other people's conditions, but of different amounts of concern with the same amount of knowledge or awareness of the conditions – about a change, not so

much in their knowledge of other people's problems, but a change in how much they care about the same kinds of problems they know about. Some people grow more sensitive as they mature; others grow more callous as they age.

Without logic or reasoning ability, more complex cases will not be able to be dissected and analyzed for their relevant similarities to more obvious cases, and to see which principles might best apply to them. Relevantly similar cases may end up incorrectly being treated differently and unequally. Inconsistencies or other unsatisfactory consequences might result from the formation of (complex) principles that are not seen to be incompatible or that generate bad or unsavory consequences.

To decide matters of ethics, you simply do the best you can to state for yourself and others what the reasons or evidence is for your beliefs, reflect on them, get other views, and unless and until you are given reasons to the contrary, you assume the decisions you make are probably right. This may not sound terribly hopeful, but it is not terribly unhopeful either; it is like most other endeavors in life, even many "factual" ones. In few if any areas of life, except in the most obvious of cases, are there guarantees you will always be right when you think you are. You can put your money in the seemingly safest investments only to lose it; you can think your family perceives you one way when instead they think of you in a totally different way; you can swear, after looking, that an intersection is clear of traffic and pull out only to immediately be hit by an oncoming car you never saw; you can arrange to meet someone at a certain time and place only to find out the other person is certain a different time or place was specified; you can follow to the letter a recipe in your kitchen or a formula in your chemistry class and have it not turn out anywhere near how it is supposed to; you can add a column of numbers four times and get four different answers; and you can add it twice and get the same answer both times and yet it could still be the wrong answer. Similarly in ethics. Some ethical insights are more readily obvious

than others – it is wrong to torture children or to assault or murder innocent people for your own pleasure. These again are examples to show that at least some moral principles are objective, knowable, and true; and I see no reason to believe other principles might not be equally knowable, objective, and true, though maybe not so obvious.

Related to the question of how you know or decide what is right or wrong is the question often asked by introductory students, "Who is to say what is right or wrong, good or bad?" My answer is that everyone can say it. But that does not make everyone right in their assessments; nor does it mean everyone is even reasonable in their assessments. One has to look at the reasons, not the office or even necessarily the character, of a person to see whether that person's conclusions seem justified or not. It is what is said, and the argument or evidence for it, not who says it, that is important in assessing its correctness.

In some cases of fact, the same is true. In wartime or shortly thereafter, if you come across an unexploded bomb, mine, or shell, it is not who says it is defused and safe but the evidence they can point to that makes their report more believable. Even an expert, if he has made an error in observation or has been incorrectly briefed or has made some other sort of mistake, could be wrong; and even a novice or laymen could possibly detect the error in conversation with him if enough details could be elicited. Knowing nothing about dentistry, I once asked one dentist to show me how he knew the pain and symptoms I had were being caused by an abscessed tooth. He drew a diagram of what an abscess looks like and showed me the x-ray he had taken. There was not the clear cut similarity to me between his diagram and my x-ray that I had expected. I knew that I was not great at distinguishing things in x-rays, but I was still not terribly convinced he was seeing it right either. I pointed out what I did not see and asked further questions. He recalled the possibility of abscess-like symptoms being the result of sinus infections instead. Since he was planning on a somewhat expensive and irreversible

procedure for me and since I was not in pain that I could not endure a while longer, I decided, with his concurrence, to wait a few days to see whether it got worse, and might show up more clearly (to me) in a subsequent x-ray as an abscess would, or not. In that time period, the pain went away altogether.

Consider who is to decide at an intersection when to proceed past a yield sign or when to proceed after stopping at a stop sign, or when to make a legal right turn at a red light. Each driver (and sometimes their passengers who might disagree with them). Does this mean everyone will always make the right, or even a reasonable, choice? No, of course not. Even if there is no ensuing accident, it does not mean one made a correct or reasonable choice; an accident may only have been prevented by the fortunate fast reflexes of an oncoming motorist forced to use his brakes. The driver of the first car may not even be aware how lucky he was. And of course, in ethics, one does not always have such glaring examples as wrecks or their avoidance to help vindicate one's choices.

One often has to point just to reasons, many of which may not be very graphic or visual. In ethics, proof is not to the eyes, but to the mind. But much of science is also that way too.

Acts, motives, cause, intentions: This is an area, filled with sometimes important ambiguities and pitfalls, which I cannot discuss or clarify completely, but I want to point out some things to be cautious about and watch out for, and I want to point out some ways to avoid confusion.

First, consider: "Mom, I'm not pulling the dog's tail – I am just holding on to it; the dog is pulling." "I did not hit him with the baseball; I just threw it close to him and he ducked into it." "We are not excluding blacks; we are just excluding people who cannot pass this particular test." "We did not bomb civilian targets; civilian areas were just hit by stray bombs."

By an act, I mean what a person actually does, though, as these examples show, sometimes that is difficult to describe; by motive, I will mean the reasons which the person consciously has for doing

the act; by cause, I mean anything other than reasons the person has that provoke him or her to perform the act; by intention, usually I mean the act that the person intended to do, not his or her motivation nor the consequences of the act, whether expected, desired, or actual. As an example, suppose a tired mother aroused in the middle of the night by a sick child administers the wrong medicine to the child by mistake and actually harms it. Her intention was to give the child the correct medicine; her motivation or reasons were so that the child would get well; her actual act was to give the child the wrong medicine; the cause of that act was (at least in part) her fatigue; the intended consequences were to have the child's health improve; the actual consequences were to have the child's health worsen.

The distinctions, however you want to describe or name them, between what I call cause, motivation, intention, and act is important because they help keep us from confusing many of the things we need to distinguish in ethics; and they help keep us from being confused concerning the things we want to say about them. For example, we might want to say of the mother in the above situation that she did the wrong thing, performed the wrong act, an act which had bad consequences, but that she is not a bad person, since she intended to do the right thing and had laudable reasons (or motivation) for her act and it was not her fault she was tired. It is particularly important to distinguish between whether, on the one hand, an act is right or wrong, and whether, on the other hand, the person performing it is good or bad. Good people can do wrong acts, and even in one sense have bad intentions – suppose the mother gave the medicine she intended to give, but that she had misdiagnosed the ailment and mistakenly intended to give the medicine which turned out to be the wrong one. She carried out bad intentions and committed a wrong act but with good motivation. (The word intention is often ambiguous in that sometimes it refers to intended consequences or motives – in which case here then it would be said the mother intended to give the child the medicine

that would make it well, but failed in her intention – and sometimes it refers to intended acts, in which case she did give the baby the medicine she intended to.)

In a given context, you have to try to be clear about what is meant. That is not always easy. I got into a hypothetical discussion in my office one time with both a traffic court judge and a policeman about whether a citation and/or conviction was warranted in the following kind of case. To me, it is a paradigm of the kind of traffic violation that does not deserve citation or conviction. The judge got all bogged down in the question of intention. The example concerns the situation you sometimes see where a motorist stops at an intersection or parking lot exit and is waiting for traffic to clear so that he can turn onto the main highway. But while he is looking directly at an oncoming car, approaching from his left in the lane he wants to enter, he pulls out right in front of it without seeing it at all, though he was looking right at it. The driver either never sees the approaching car or he sees it when it is too late to stop or back up. Everyone has seen this sort of thing (a policeman even did it to me one day); the driver's mouth drops open and his eyes bug out if he sees you and realizes he has somehow really screwed up and is about to get hit broadside if you cannot stop or swerve around him. I am not talking about the kind of case where someone sees the oncoming car and mistakenly thinks he can beat it. I am talking about the case where a driver should have seen a car approaching from not very far away from him while his eyes were looking directly at it, but he does not see it. I claim there is no reason to issue a citation because it is a mistake and some sort of mental aberration. We are not talking about the kind of case where someone is selfishly trying to cut out in front of you and either misjudges the distance or does not care whether you have to slow down, mash your breaks, or swerve, or not. We are discussing the kind of case where someone would never have started out if he really realized what he was doing. The judge said: "You mean you don't think a citation should be issued if the driver did not intend to do what he did?" My response

was that was not an issue here since, in one sense, the driver did what he intended – he pulled out into the highway; it was not as if his foot slipped onto the accelerator by accident. He just did not intend to pull out in front of someone. I do not know exactly how to describe this kind of case in general terms – "inadvertent" perhaps – but trying to describe the driver's action only as intentional or not intentional does not do justice to the crucial elements of the example.

Or consider the case of a parent or counselor who has good motivations for giving advice that turns out to be the wrong advice – yet still it was the advice the person intended to give; it was not as if he had misspoken or been misunderstood. This is the kind of case where the word intention often is meant to refer to the counselor's motivation or the consequences he expected or intended to bring about with his advice. Thus, when those consequences do not occur, the intentions may be the kind of proverbial intentions which pave the road to hell, since meaning well does not guaranty one will do well, and since having good motivation or intending and working for good consequences, does not insure good consequences will occur from the act one performs.

Further, our intended acts are not always the acts we actually perform (as with a baseball pitcher who hangs a curve ball or throws a pitch closer to the plate than he intended), and the consequences of our acts are not always the ones we intend expect, or desire, whether our motivations or reasons are good or not.

In short, you should not necessarily infer a person's intentions or motivation from how his acts, or their consequences turn out, and you should not necessarily infer a person's character from how his acts or their consequences turn out. Too many people take as a personal attack on their character or their motivation a claim that their acts or intended acts are wrong; and too many people today infer from the fact that a person's act was wrong that he must have had either bad intentions (referring to either acts or consequences) or bad motives, neither of which may be correct. A person can be

incompetent or ignorant or both or one can be simply mistaken about the value of an act or about what its (actual) consequences will be or one can make a mistake or slip in trying to perform the act; one does not have to be bad or malevolent to perform a wrong act. I will argue later that following the "Golden Rule" often leads to wrong acts fathered by good motives.

Another kind of case where it would be a mistake to infer intention from (perceived) action is the following kind. Suppose one parent has been home with the children who have completely messed up the house by dragging out all their toys to play with, etc. Suppose that parent has picked up (and had the children pick up) most of the toys. The other parent may return, and, not knowing how much had been cleaned up already, might accuse the spouse of being lazy and/or not trying to keep the house tidy. There are many situation like this, where one person sees just how much needs to be done, not how much has already been done, and then makes incorrect character judgments about the people involved.

It is also possible, though perhaps more difficult, to try to harm someone or to try to do something that has bad consequences but that instead turns out to be the "right" action, one that has good consequences. Suppose someone futilely tries to assassinate a good world leader but that the attempt cancels the remainder of the leader's agenda for that day, thereby foiling a much more probably successful assassination attempt by someone else. We might say it was a good thing the first person (the attempting assassin) did what he did.

Although it is sometimes possible to determine the motives of another or to know what his intended acts and intended consequences were, it is usually easier to judge whether the act was right or wrong than it is to judge whether a person or his motives were good or bad. That is because an act and its consequences tend to be more observable or discernable than a person's motives or state of mind. For the most part, the remainder of this section will deal with the rightness and wrongness of acts rather than the

benevolence or malevolence of people or their motives. Trying to discuss with a loved one the rightness or wrongness of one of your or their actions is difficult enough without in addition questioning or knowing motivation or character. Just because someone does something wrong, or believes in some erroneous principle, that does not mean they are lazy, selfish, stupid, evil, or vicious. And determining principles for deciding right and wrong is philosophically difficult enough without also having to determine psychological principles that make discernible and verifiable the mental states of others. In some cases it may be clear what a person's motivation is, but many cases are not clear. One needs to know all the relevant facts to determine rightness of acts and goodness of character or motivation. Usually that is easier about rightness of acts – since acts and their consequences are more visible than character or motivation.

But sometimes both are difficult to know. I grew up in a quiet residential neighborhood where once in a while a car would speed down the street much too fast. If adults were outside, they usually yelled to the driver to slow down and be more careful – or they might even stop a driver and admonish him or her. One day two cars drove down the narrow street speeding, careening, and playing a kind of tag. No one was able to stop them or slow them down. All the adults were angry at the drivers. A few hours later, however, one of the cars returned and pulled over to explain and apologize. His child had cut its head and was bleeding profusely, and the driver and his wife were trying to rush to the hospital. But the car in front of them was not letting them pass, not understanding the emergency. This driver, who returned, was the one who kept honking his horn and trying to go around the other car. Fortunately the child's injury was not as serious as it looked and the child was all right. That justifiably gave everyone a different attitude about this driver and about his speeding and "driving like a maniac".

The Meaning of Ethical Terms Such As Good and Right

I follow somewhat the idea of the philosopher G.E. Moore who

argued that you know what the term good means even though you cannot define it in terms simpler than itself. You can point to good men, good motives, good deeds, etc. and perhaps explain that the term is honorific or praising in some way. It is not unlike knowing what a color like "yellow" is; you can point to all kinds of yellow objects and you can point out that yellow is a color, but there is no way to define the term yellow in any terms simpler or more intelligible than itself. To explain color in terms of non-color terms, such as the wavelength of light, will not help a blind person understand what yellow is ,and it will not teach colors to a child. Yellow is something you see; and if you cannot see it, you cannot exactly understand it. Good is one of the basic ideas of morality and one of the basic terms in moral discourse; it cannot be further dissected and defined, and I suspect its moral sense cannot be defined in terms having nothing to do with morality. And just as people without a sense of sight cannot see whether an object is yellow or not, people without any moral sense or sensitivity cannot see for themselves whether acts, people, or motives are good or right.

Now philosophers today tend to use the word right to describe acts; good to describe people or motives. Obviously this is somewhat of a professional convention since in ordinary language we often speak of "good deeds" or say things like "Jones did a good thing yesterday". The convention is useful though for being able to distinguish, say, between an act's good consequences and/or its bad consequences on the one hand, and its overall rightness or wrongness on the other. We might be able to say that "such and such an act had some good consequences but it was the wrong thing to do because it had some worse consequences on balance than the other thing that could have been done." Or, the reverse, that "I know getting a shot at the doctor's is painful and to that extent is a bad thing, but it is the right thing to do because the amount of good the shot will do overrides the amount of pain or bad involved." Or, someone might break a promise because he had something better or more enjoyable to do (something that might cause more good

than keeping the promise would), yet you might hold that he should have kept the promise anyway, that breaking it was the wrong thing to do, even though more good did result from breaking it. (More about this last sort of case later.)

I depart from Moore in that he thought you could define a right act as one that, on overall balance ,caused the most good or least harm. But this is actually not a definition of right; it is instead a theory about which acts are right and which ones are wrong. The above example regarding promise breaking (and others I will give later) suggests that there are acts which cause more overall good than their alternatives but which are nevertheless wrong acts to do. On Moore's theory of what right means, this would be a contradiction and not something to have to ponder.

I hold that the word right, like the word good, is basically simple and can be understood, though not further defined. We know the meaning of the words like good or right, though we may have trouble telling whether they should apply to a particular act or person. Just because you cannot tell whether a person is good or not, or his acts right or not, does not mean you do not know what the words mean, just as the difficulty of knowing the colors of the rocks at the deepest parts of the sea does not mean you do not know what colors are. If I were to tell you that eating arsenic or feeding it to the neighbors' children was right or that rapists were good people, you would surely disagree or at least want to know why I should think such things. I think that shows you know what the words mean and shows that you have some notion about how to apply them. If I said giving or taking arsenic was quebe (a word I just made-up), you would not disagree or demand my reasons for thinking so, but would ask instead what I meant or what I was talking about.

Now, given that you understand the meaning of the word right, we can then define words like ought, should, and obligation, though we do not have to do that because most people understand these words too – and because in a way these definitions are actually less

obvious then the words themselves. We can also define words like saintly (supererogatory to philosophers) or phrases like "beyond the call of duty". An act is a "duty", "obligatory", "ought to be done", or "should be done" if it is right and there is no other (equally) right act available to the agent. Notice, acts that are almost right or almost as right are not actually right – "almost as right" is still wrong, though it may not be as "bad" as some other act that may be more clearly wrong, or that may be worse – that is, have much worse consequences. If there is more than one right act open to an agent, either of them or any of them is permissible without a particular one of them being obligatory, though there is an obligation to do some one of these acts. That is, if the only right acts in a situation are A, B, C, or D, then one must do one of them but the choice of which specifically is not prescribed. ***An act is "supererogatory" or "saintly" or "beyond the call of duty"*** if it is a right act but is not one, nor one of a number, that could be called required or obligatory, not one that could be called a duty or moral obligation. Such an act might be one of sacrifice like throwing oneself on a grenade to save one's friends. It might be one of giving an exceedingly large charitable donation.

Personal Responsibility

This is the final issue I want to deal with before getting into actual ethical principles for determining which acts are right and which are wrong. If people cannot help or control what they do or what they choose to do, it is said they cannot be responsible or held to be responsible for their actions. I want to make it clear that I think people can be responsible for their actions (or for their omissions), and I want to discuss under what circumstances they are and under which they might not be. Knowing ethical principles may be of little use to someone who (in a particular circumstance) cannot follow them anyway, but I think such people or such circumstances are somewhat rarer than some people realize or contend.

Some of the philosophical arguments for free will versus determinism make a good place to begin, for (1) they shed a certain amount of light on the notion of what responsibility is, and (2) they

explain a number of the circumstances under which a person could not be (held) responsible for his or her action.

There are two different ways, it is claimed, that people might not be responsible for their actions: (1) if what they do is the result simply of some chance, totally unexpected, unwilled, random, unexplainable, or unpredictable occurrence that takes place accidentally in their mind or body – perhaps like cases of hitting a short putt too hard even though you know better and in some sense do not really mean to do it, but seem unable to help it; or like having some sort of seizure over which you have no control. People would also not be responsible if (2) their behavior were the result solely of a chain of causes or forces and interaction of events (both outside the body and inside the brain, sense organs, nerves, and "sinews") that led inexorably to every choice made and to every action's results. If an act or choice is the result solely of forces over which we had no control to begin with, then we are not responsible for that act or choice, any more than billiard balls set in motion on a table are responsible for what others they hit or where they stop. Compulsive behavior, unaffected by choice, seems to me to serve as a perfect illustration of behavior which is the result of organic causes over which the agent has no control and for which he, she, or it is not responsible. Little toddlers drawn to noisy or shiny objects, moths drawn to flames, and puppies drawn to delicious treats seem to me to be acting compulsively or as the result of causes over which they have no control. So perhaps do compulsive eaters – people who eat compulsively though they try to diet or may want to lose weight – some alcoholics, compulsive smokers, voluptuaries, etc. People who are unable to choose their actions or unable to do what they choose (if there are such people) are not free or responsible in those areas. On a television comedy, one fellow complained and explained to his colleagues envious of his frequent sexual successes, "I can't help it; I'm a prisoner of my biological urges."

If determinism is true, or if it is true for any particular act or choice – that is, if an act or choice is the inescapable consequence of forces beyond the agent's control – or if indeterminism (for a

given act or choice) is true – that is, if an act or choice is the result of some uncontrollable chance or totally uncaused or unpredictable and unexplainable occurrence – then ethical principles and moral reasoning would not actually show you what was right (in those cases). They would have no effect at all regarding indeterminate, chance behavior. And in regard to (pre-)determined behavior that is the result of long causal chains, they would just be other links in those chains – we could not help invent them, and they would influence further actions in the same ways that spankings, punishments, or other influencing causes of behavior do. They would not be reasons for behaving in certain ways but would be causes contributing to behaving that way.

I believe that to act freely is not to act either compulsively (determinism) or by chance (indeterminism) but to act in regard to an informed, rational or reasoned choice, a choice which can be examined for its reasonableness and objectiveness. This does not dismiss emotions or sensations, as some would hold, since these can be taken into account by reason. Reason or logic can understand that something can be enjoyable, and that such enjoyment is a logical reason in favor of the activity contemplated, though it may not be the sole factor to take into account. Reason and logic can consider sensations and joy, but joy and sensations alone cannot consider logic or anything else. I believe people are responsible for the acts they perform that are the result of the free choices they make in this way.

But furthermore, I believe people are also responsible for any choice they make that they could have made differently and for any resulting act they did that they could have done differently, even though they may not have made the choice or done the act rationally or objectively. Irrational choices, which are neither accidental nor the result of uncontrollable forces, make the person responsible for his actions though they do not show responsibility (in the sense of maturity) in behavior or decision making. Although there may be forces at work sometimes in some people that

inescapably make them do things over which they have no control, and although these things may be wrong acts or bad choices, not all wrong acts or bad choices are the result of inescapable forces nor ones people could not have made otherwise.

It is difficult to prove perhaps whether someone has been acted on by forces outside his or her control or has made a choice that they could not have made differently. But I would like to give some examples of some possible kinds of candidates for such choices. Some states of drunkenness or drug usage impair and control decision making and choices of actions, but insofar as a person has let himself or herself become drunk or drugged through voluntary actions or choices, he or she has at least some responsibility for actions under that state, particularly if prior knowledge or experience should have made the person more careful about whether or under what conditions he or she used alcohol or drugs. For example, a person who knows he will drink a great deal at a bar or at a party is responsible for his drunk driving if he drives his car there knowing he will be driving it home under the influence. If, however, one is drugged unwittingly, such as in someone else's secretly spiking their drink, and has a reaction in which they lose control of their choices or actions, then I think this is one example of a person's acting in a way for which he or she is not responsible. I think cases of being brainwashed against one's will, if the techniques have been developed to do this successfully, are such cases. Cases in which stroke, seizure, or disease have impaired memory and understanding or brought about paranoia or prevent distinguishing between reality and illusion are other cases. Cases of genuine compulsion, where no matter what a person really wants or tries to do, he or she seems compelled to do something else. It is, of course, difficult to tell in many cases whether a person is acting under inescapable influences or not, or whether, if so, they are responsible for courting those influences to begin with, but the point is that without demonstrable inescapable influences, there is no reason to believe a person is not making a choice he or she could have made differently. I think there are cases where clearly people are behaving

in ways they do not want to or would not choose if there were not something wrong with them that they cannot control – particularly where we know them and see them change overnight or after some particular understandably traumatic experience.

But this does not mean all choices or behavior is like that; we can often tell we have the power to choose either of two alternatives (the choice is ours) and to pursue what we choose. Anyone who has ever been on a diet or tried to break a habit can understand compulsive urges of whatever degree and can understand what it must be like not to be able to exercise control even if you really wanted to. And this is different from just being weak- willed and giving in to a habit or desire. Just kind of trying to give up chocolate and giving in to an occasional favorite candy bar just for a little harmless pleasure is quite different from knowing you need to give up chocolate, doing all you can to prevent eating it, and finding out you cannot keep yourself from it no matter how much you (try to) choose to stay away from it. Some people, from accounts I have read, seem to have compulsions they are unable to overcome no matter how irrational they know they are and no matter how hard they try or how much resolve they have in all other areas of their lives. It is somewhat hard to imagine adults not being in control of their choices and actions, and the courts and news media are full of highly suspicious stories given by defense attorneys alleging such forces were at work on their clients making them commit the crime they did, but to the extent any such accounts are reasonable or credible concerning any form of forced choice- making or forced action-taking, one ought to believe as well that persons under such forces are not (totally) responsible for their actions that are brought on by those forces. Credible stories are those, for example, of total personality transformations after taking a new prescription drug or after drinking a cup of punch someone hands you at a party and there is also good reason later to believe it was a person who would adulterate a drink of an unsuspecting person just as a joke.

Responsibility: Free Choice or Free Action?

There are some people who think that how you choose what you do is not the issue for responsibility and that all this talk of forces controlling someone's choices is nonsense. They think the only issues for determining responsibility are whether you did what you chose, and whether you were free to have done something else had you chosen to. Whether you could have chosen to do otherwise they think is either irrelevant or unknowable. (You have to have been free to do something other than what you did because you are not responsible for doing the only thing you can do; for example, you are not responsible for what you hit if you fall off a building or for remaining tied up in a closet if someone forcibly chains you in one.)

The claim is that even if a person's character causes him to choose what he chooses, that person is still responsible for his actions – assuming his actions were unrestrained. People who claim this would, say, hold a criminal responsible for his crime regardless of why he chose to commit it, as long as his action was not forced (say, by hypnosis). How the criminal made the choice is irrelevant. Background or medical history would be irrelevant.

I think this claim is falsely too strong and does not really attack the point and kind of cases it means to. I think if a person really could not have chosen anything besides what he actually chose, then he is not responsible for his choice and the ensuing action. But making a choice "in character" out of cowardice, due to weak will, or due to some of the other rather weak or trivial kinds of causes that lawyers and psychiatrists seem to contend force choices is not always actually to be inescapably forced to make a choice a particular way. The question, I think, should not be whether people are responsible or should be held accountable for choices they could not have made otherwise, but whether in fact the particular choice at issue is one they really could not have made otherwise. I believe if it is one they could have made otherwise – say, with more courage or reasonable foresight or with reasonably expected maturity or social conscience – then they are responsible. If not, whether because of physical disease of the brain, drugs forced on them, traumatic shock, brainwashing or anything that could have

affected almost anyone else in the same way, then they are not responsible.

Now I agree that some alleged cases of mind control seem to have subjects who give in all too easily or willingly to supposedly inescapable forces, that there are many such alleged forces which seem normally not too impossible to escape with a little will-power, and that in many (often Freudian) types of explanations it seems the alleged forces or chain of causation is too weak or too far-fetched to have much credibility. So in over-reaction to this it is argued that people are responsible even when their choices are influenced or determined. In such cases, however, it seems to me it is not that one should ignore how choices were made in order to determine responsibility, but that one should show the claimed inescapable forces are not really inescapable and so the person really is responsible for his choice, in spite of the psychiatric or defense theory claiming the contrary. It is that in these cases the person really could have chosen otherwise; it is not that truly determined choices are irrelevant to responsibility.

I think that if either one's choices are controlled or one's actions are controlled then one is not responsible for those actions; the question then simply is whether such control can ever be demonstrated. Obviously there are physical restraints to some actions some times, and I have already mentioned some kinds of cases that I think make plausible the notion of choices being uncontrollable (such as being unwittingly drugged by someone else, tumors or trauma causing "overnight" change in character, some kinds of brainwashing, etc.). But these are not conditions people normally encounter, so I think (and will argue a little further, shortly) most of the choices most people make and most of their actions are not of the sort that could reasonably be called coerced or inescapable. So their responsibility is not then inescapable either.

Other Bad Arguments Claiming People Have No Personal Responsibility

Further, when you have a choice where the alternatives are all

unpleasant ones, or where the morally right alternative is the (most) unpleasant one, you still have a choice and are still responsible for what you do. Having a choice does not require having only to choose between wonderful alternatives. When one of my students one time said her husband had no choice but to go to Viet Nam in the army, that was not true. That may have been the best option of a bunch of bad options open to him, but nevertheless the choice was his to make. Sometimes, through no particular fault of his or her own, a person may not recognize he or she has an option; and that may be the same as not having it at all; but recognizing an option as an unpleasant option does not remove it as an option. Socrates, and others have chosen imprisonment and/or death over other options. Socrates felt, and I think there is some merit to this, though it is hard to express why exactly, that it is better in some cases to be the one harmed than the one who does harm. It is better though not happier nor more fortunate. You may not have control over your luck and destiny or what happens to you but you do have control over (some of) what you do, and you should at least make certain that whenever possible you do not add evil to the world even if others choose to do wrong and put you in a position where you must also do evil or suffer some unhappy consequence at their hands. Of course, not all situations require the most self-sacrifice; it is far more reasonable to give a thief your money if that will prevent him from taking your life and then your money anyway. And perhaps Socrates gave up too much when he gave up his life rather than agree to give up teaching (doing) philosophy in Athens. (Aristotle, later given the same ultimatum is reported to have said, "Let Athens not sin twice against philosophy" and left.) But there are times where the right choice does demand sacrifice of some sort because all the alternatives are terrible ones and the least terrible or ignoble one may be the one that calls for the most sacrifice by the agent.

There are a number of theories that try to prove responsibility is a fantasy by trying to show that forces work to determine everything,

not just in the physical world, but in the mental world as well, hence controlling all our choices and behavior. I want to try to repudiate such theories here.

Some people point to what seems to be quite apparent compulsive behavior by some individuals, and then try to extrapolate from that to the "compulsion" of all behavior of all individuals. The two types of behavior are so different though, as I think I have already said enough to show, that there is no reason to believe their causes or mechanisms are the same. Being a compulsive or obsessive eater is not like choosing to go off a diet out of temptation or weak will. And it is certainly not like choosing to have lunch when you are hungry at lunch time and have no good reason not to have lunch.

Some people argue that the regularity of occurrences – so many people committing murders each year, so many forgetting to address envelopes they mail, so many people getting married or buying cars (in proportion to the strength of the economy, etc.) – shows there must be forces at work to determine what happens in our lives. But (1) even supposed random occurrences (shuffling and dealing cards, spinning a roulette wheel, tossing a coin) have statistical regularity or averages; that does not take away their randomness or make them caused or (pre-)determined. It certainly does not mean forces are at work on individual occurrences (or any occurrences) to make them fall into a certain pattern. (2) Things like marriages and car-buying in a particular economic situation may show that forces influence decisions, but may do so rationally, without thereby totally causing them. One can even reasonably and correctly predict what people will choose and do in some particular cases, but this does not mean they have been caused or determined to do so or that they could not have chosen or done otherwise.

For example, it is a fairly safe prediction that under normal circumstances college students will leave their classrooms within 24 hours of their class' being over. They do not have to leave but it would be rather strange not to. Knowing that a person is mature and independent and in love might give you reason to believe that an

improvement in his or her financial situation might make marriage a more reasonable alternative than it was before such an improvement. Knowing that a person is rational and knowing what the rational alternatives would be for her or him to make lets one predict with fair accuracy what the person's choice and actions will be.

Making a rational choice is not like making a forcibly determined one nor like making a random one. So your predictions are not based on the same kind of determined behavior or laws that one might use to predict the "behavior" of the planets or even of small children or puppies and moths.

It is true that (pre-)determined behavior is theoretically predictable, but that does not show that theoretically predictable behavior is therefore (pre-)determined. Some children and even some adults become really upset when you predict their actions – even ones that are obvious and that any rational person would make under the circumstances. They seem to feel that you are taking away their choice or their freedom to choose, or somehow showing they have no real choice they can make – that they have been pre-determined to choose or act a certain way. This is simply wrong, however; acting freely and rationally is different from acting, say, compulsively, ignorantly, or both even though both kinds of actions might have in common that they can be predicted.

The most persuasive or perhaps simply pervasive theory seeming to undermine the notion of personal responsibility is that of (Freudian and other kinds of) psychoanalytic psychological theories that postulate or believe that there are subconscious or unconscious forms of control over our conscious acts or choices. I believe these theories are not really demonstrated. I will give two kinds of arguments in summary for my belief.

First there is evidence that psychoanalysis often does not work and that it often at least does not work as well as other sorts of methods which do not involve "study" of subconscious motivation – methods such as behavior therapy, existentialist psychotherapy,

responsibility therapy, client-centered therapy, etc. And when psychoanalysis does seem to work, it is not clear that it works because of the part involving study of the supposed sub-conscious. It may "work" because the therapist listened to the client and made the client feel worthwhile or because the client thought about his behavior for the first time in talking about it to the therapist, or it may work for some other such reason. I have met some people who were undergoing psychoanalytic therapy who were becoming very facile in describing allegedly warping childhood experiences or relationships and very good at ascribing blame to everyone (particularly their parents) but themselves for their behavior, and they were becoming very good at naming their behavior in the scientific jargon of the day; but so often they were not one whit closer to changing that behavior for the better. Since I first read about alternative kinds of therapies a number of articles have appeared showing from experiments how some of them seem to deal with (at least many kinds of) problems better than psychoanalysis. In one study, people who were afraid of snakes were allowed to view some snakes and others handling them in another room through a safety glass. Then they were allowed to enter the room and approach the snakes at their own pace. People got over their fear of at least these snakes in a very short period of time, and far shorter than those who would do so, if at all, by undergoing some sort of psychoanalysis trying to understand their subconscious problems with penises that are supposedly shown by their fear of snakes. And, as should seem obvious, I would think, most people who are afraid of snakes are so because they cannot distinguish poisonous ones from others or do not know how to keep from being bitten or squeezed (or crushed) by any kind and do not want to take any chances, so they stay away from all snakes. As one newspaper writer once put it, as far as he was concerned a green snake was just as dangerous as a ripe one.

Second, all the clever little stories that psychoanalysts can make up that seem to explain behavior are more a result, I suspect, of their cleverness at literary invention than of their insight. There are

a number of examples of stories that seem plausible explanations of behavior or of feelings, fears, etc. but which are either false, satirical, far-fetched, or simply unexplanatory on closer inspection. One of the wittier and more elaborate such satires is in Edgar F. Borgatta's "Sidesteps Toward a Non-special Theory" (Borgatta, 1954) appearing first in Psychological Review, Vol. 61, No. 5, September 1954, and reprinted in Psychology in the Wry (D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc.), edited by Robert A. Baker. Part of the article, and part of the satire gives humorous, spoofing arguments about how (given it is obvious that hands play a large part in human sexuality and gratification) much of seemingly ordinary behavior involving hands can be seen to be really sexual in nature, though, of course, unconsciously or subconsciously so – applause, shaking hands, holding cigarettes, holding a golf club, tennis racquet, or baseball bat, covering your mouth while yawning, etc. "Just recently an associate put his finger on an important example in this area by bringing up the story of Peter and the Dike. Peter's action, usually interpreted as an example of great courage and devotion, is actually, in the light of this new theory, one of gross self- indulgence." [Emphasis mine.]

My younger sister is fond of telling how she became so terribly afraid of spiders. When she was little, she had a floorless cardboard doll house that was big enough for her to sit inside. Once while she was in it, outside on the lawn, I held the door closed so she could not come out. She says now that there was a spider in there with her when I did that, that she felt trapped with it, and has ever since been terrified of spiders. However, as explanatory as this may appear at first blush, it seems to me not to hold up. It seems that she must already have been afraid of spiders or she would not have minded being in there with this particular one; after all, she was also "trapped" in there with dandelions, clover, and blades of grass and she is not afraid of them now. Nor is she afraid of doll houses, nor of closets or other confining spaces.

Similarly, I chuckle at persons who have told me that I must have

subconsciously liked my father more than my mother when I was a child because I now like to have my back scratched the way he used to do it, but not the way my mother used to do it. It is true that I loved for my father to scratch my back, and hated for my mother to do it – but it has always been obvious to me that that was because he did it with enough force to make it feel good both as scratching and as massage, whereas she always was afraid she would scratch (tear) your skin or hurt you and so did it so lightly, that the way my skin reacted, it tickled and then made my back itch twice as much as when she started "scratching". A backscratching device or the convenient edge of a wall, with enough force, will still suffice for good feeling, instead of a light source or tickle. I liked lots of things my mother did, and disliked some things my father did; backscratching, though, was not one of them. I doubt there is any subconscious motivation behind it.

One older psychiatrist I once had a discussion with said, "We have come a long way since Freud's day; we no longer believe, for instance, that a man choosing to eat a hot dog rather than a hamburger at the beach is voicing a homosexual preference." I am certainly glad they no longer believe that; I am just sorry they ever did, especially since I suspect it could have easily been tested as to whether shape or taste was more important by putting hamburger in hot dog shape and vice versa.

Finally, to say that a person does something because his ego (or whatever) makes him do it only serves to relocate the original question then to seek what made his ego do it. Do you then need to postulate some sub-ego? Then why does that want to do it? Etc. And to say that one does something now because he learned to do it early in life, does not say why he should choose to continue to do it, particularly if it is behavior that he thinks is wrong or finds distressing. One can read in psychiatric papers and in the news media all kinds of accounts of what seems to be really abnormal and bizarre or terrible behavior. I am not sure how much understanding such behavior, if that is possible, might shed light on what seems to be normal everyday behavior, even normal everyday bad behavior.

And I am not certain what, if anything, might help change people who are far beyond anything like normal thoughts, feelings, and actions. But I think regarding the many more-or-less ordinary kinds of behavior and choice or lifestyle problems that more-or-less ordinary people experience, in many circumstances the primary conditions are first to figure out what is better and why it is, and then to make the choice to change and to exert the will to do it. Of course there may be some outside help needed to figure out what is right and/or help needed to do it; and of course one may need to play some mental games or step back, if possible, from frightening, enervating, or harrying situations to calmly reflect, meditate, or collect oneself in order to change one's behavior to a way one thinks is better. Many people vacillate about behavior because they are not really certain about what is right to do. Once they can decide that (and these chapters on ethics are meant to help people be able to more wisely make those determinations in so-called ethical areas), then the choice and the act of will can readily follow without having to delve into the motivation of the subconscious or having to overcome something that happened to you in the womb or in the first few years after birth.

I say "so-called" ethical areas to distinguish them, as is the custom, from practical areas of life. But I generally do not really make that distinction and find sometimes that what seem to be, or are, great moral dilemmas can often be solved with practical knowledge or wisdom. If you borrow something expensive from someone and somehow stain it, you have a choice to replace it at your own expense, to accept their protests that you not worry about it, to lie about the stain or pretend it did not happen, etc. But if someone knows a safe, effective, inexpensive way to remove the stain, and it actually works, the ethical problem disappears. If modern medicine could discover a reasonable way to safely transplant embryos from women who did not want to be pregnant to women who did but could not get pregnant on their own, some cases of unwanted pregnancies could be happily solved without having to deal with

the moral question of whether it is right to terminate the life of an unborn you do not want to have to bear.

I think too often people mean by "ethical" or "moral", those problems concerning the right way to act which they think have no practical or obvious solution, or in which the solution is to do something that is unpleasant for the person who has to do it. In this latter regard you often hear someone admonish another or worry themselves about what is the moral thing to do in a situation where they are certain what is the moral thing is some sort of sacrificing or at least unpleasant thing to do. You almost never hear anyone say something like, "but you know the moral thing to do would be to go ahead and have a good time." Well, sometimes I think the moral thing to do is to have a good time, when there is no good or overriding reason not to.

And it could be the moral, not just the enjoyable thing to do, since it could be the kind of situation where you would be obligated to help someone else who was just like you and in relevantly similar circumstances have a good time; and if you should treat people in relevantly similar circumstances similarly and fairly, then it would be the kind of situation in which you should help yourself have a good time. I think there are situations where it is as ethically obligatory to choose something enjoyable for yourself when you are deserving as it would be in other circumstances for you to choose it for another person who is deserving. Enjoyment is not the kind of thing one can only owe to others.

Further, I think there are many things we do that could be considered moral, but since they are so easy to do and/or so obviously what needs to be done, we do not feel the use of our ethical sensitivity or intuitions in deciding them. For example, instinctively holding a door for someone carrying packages, or helping them carry them; taking a child's hand as you cross the street or descend steps; keeping appointments or calling ahead to cancel them with an explanation. Or I think treating a deserving child nicely on her birthday (or any day) is not just fun or a social custom; I think it is a moral obligation, though there is no moral

obligation to have a party, decorations, or cake and ice cream. In fact, if one thinks sweets a bad thing, one might serve a more healthful kind of treat, and that might be a moral duty, as well as a labor of love or a most enjoyable thing to do.

I also do not like to divide actions into moral and practical because I think that psychologically gives people an (invalid) excuse to act immorally while doing what they consider to be practical matters. They mistakenly think they can avoid moral responsibility by "only following orders", "only abiding by the decision of the committee", "only following procedure", "just doing what has always been done", "just doing what everyone else does", "just following policy or the regulations," or "just doing what the boss (or job) requires". Similar attempted justification for shirking of responsibility sometimes is "that is not my department" so I cannot help you. People, however, have a moral responsibility for a situation to the extent they could influence it.

Of course, there are some cases where the person in question has no influence whatsoever on policy and cannot change it, reasonably make exceptions to it, or influence those who could. In such cases they may have no responsibility in the matter. But most often the person is not powerless to influence the matter, make an exception, plead the cause, or at least in some way help out the person in need; they simply do not want to take the time or make the effort to do it, and may even think that because they have no "professional" obligation to help, they also have no moral obligation to help. This is the impersonal and often irresponsible side of bureaucracy or departmentalization, whether it occurs in government or in business. Neither is immune, and it runs rampant in both. Often it is even detrimental to business profits – when a worthwhile project is ignored or thoughtlessly rejected. Now I am not trying to argue every employee needs to (re)consider every crackpot proposal and bother his/her superior about them; I am saying that if an employee really believes a proposal has merit or a person needs to be helped with a problem or has a legitimate complaint that is being ignored,

that employee has some sort of moral obligation to try to help or influence the process if he or she can. One does not avoid such an obligation by ignoring it; one just avoids fulfilling the obligation.

There are at least two different senses of the sentence "Jones is responsible for [some particular phenomenon]", however, and I don't want those to be confused. In the sense I have been discussing, Jones is responsible for those things which he could influence or affect. This does not, in itself however, tell *which way* Jones should act. But Jones can also be said to be responsible in the different sense of being "culpable" or blameworthy when he should have acted a certain way but did not. I do not want to imply that just because someone is responsible in the first sense that he is necessarily also responsible in the second sense when something bad happens that, in part, results from his action or inaction. If a person makes an understandable and reasonable mistake about the consequences of his action or inaction, he may be neither actively culpable nor negligent. Good intentions and reasonable choices do sometimes lead to mistakes. There will be times one should have acted differently than one did, but that will be apparent only in hindsight, not at the time the decision is made. People tend to blame themselves (or others) for results they could have affected but reasonably chose not to. That is a case of mistaking being able to effect an outcome at all with knowing how to make the right outcome happen. The cases of shirking moral responsibility I have been discussing are cases where people ignore the consequences of their behavior and think that is all right, not where they make the wrong decision about how to behave, but were still being conscientious.

There are other ways people ignore moral responsibility – by thoughtlessly and slavishly following fad or custom so as not to make waves or call attention to themselves instead of thinking about what needs to be done and doing it if they can. I once attended a course in a church where many of the members were wealthy and very image conscious. The room the course was taught in always got

much too warm, but the teacher pleaded ignorance to how to work the heating and air conditioning controls (though it was not that hard to figure out). The first three class sessions, I asked whether it would be all right to turn off the heat or turn on the air conditioning, and everyone said yes, that they were too warm too. But they looked funny at me as if I were a disruptive influence even though the whole thing only took a few seconds.

The fourth week, I decided to see what would happen in this class of 60 people if I did nothing. No one did anything – they sat there fanning themselves with makeshift fans and mopping their brows with handkerchiefs. There were a number of pregnant women in the class, but none of the guys in the three piece suits, or anyone else, made a move toward the thermostat. At the end of the class, I asked why no one did anything about the heat. They all said they felt they could suffer through it. I asked why they did not do something to alleviate their neighbors' or the pregnant women's discomfort. "Didn't think about it," was the response. I suspect they also did not want to call the slightest bit of attention to themselves; and would rather physically suffer and let others do the same than to behave "differently" by getting up and turning down the heat.

Now this is not a major matter, but I think it is illustrative of many common situations where people do not act in a reasonable and correct way because they do not think about it, because they do not think they have any personal responsibility for circumstances in which they do not have "official" responsibility (as in "that's not my department"), or because they do not want to be conspicuous – particularly by being different in some way. Habits, customs, traditions take on an importance, often out of proportion to their merit. I think all actions are moral (good, bad, or neutral) but not all choices or actions are made on the basis of (moral or reasonable) reflection or deliberation. Much is just done out of habit and/or thoughtlessness.

I think there is another aspect to personal responsibility besides the issue of what to do in particular situations. That is deciding what

situations to get into in the first place (or remain in)– essentially, deciding how to spend your time and life. Of course not all of us can always do anything we want or feel would be best, and we don't always even know ahead of time what would be best, but there are many times people allow themselves to get into situations they could have avoided and which they should have avoided and should have known to avoid, in order to do better things – for themselves and for others.

If you look at life as a limited time or limited opportunity of which to make the most and do your best, then you want to put yourself in as many situations as you can that help you do that. A person who voluntarily puts himself (or remains) in bad company or bad circumstances, which thus engenders only choices between evil acts, may not be immediately or directly blameworthy or responsible for doing something bad which is the best alternative open to him. But those acts are ones for which he is ultimately responsible since he should have known in the first place to avoid or leave situations that would make him do those acts or have to choose between only bad acts. It is not a good excuse to say something like "Since I have this job, I have to act in this particular, bad way," since (even if such a statement is true) you are responsible for taking, or remaining in, the job.

Key Takeaways

- Ethics is objective. Know the reasons why this is so.
- Terms are not able to be defined in terms simpler than themselves.
- Doing ethics well requires both moral sensitivity and logical reasoning (including conceptual understanding).

- Personal responsibility involves both 1) freedom and ability to do what you choose, and 2) freedom and ability to choose other options.
- What is decided is generally more important than who decides.
- Intentions determine whether an agent is good or bad, not whether an act is right or wrong.

Key Terms

- ***An act is "supererogatory" or "saintly" or "beyond the call of duty"*** if it is a right act; but is not one, that could be called required or obligatory, not one that could be called a duty or moral obligation. Such an act might be one of sacrifice like throwing oneself on a grenade to save one's friends. It might be one of giving an exceedingly large charitable donation.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What does it require to figure out proper values and correct or reasonable moral principles?
- ***Question***: The sensitivity required for being able to

discover and appreciate sound moral values and principles includes what?

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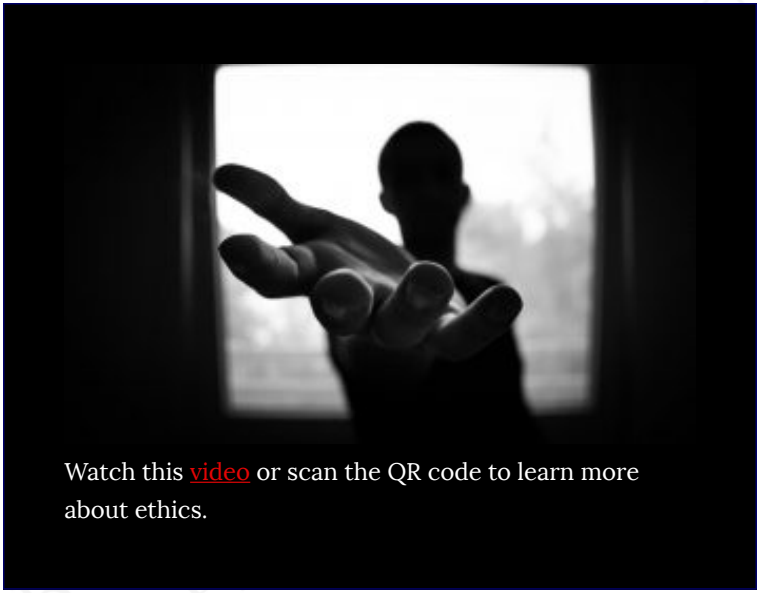
Chapter 26 Ethics — Seeking to Discover What the Highest Principles of Behavior and the Things of Greatest Value Are

Chapter 26 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Discuss the major theories of ethics about what makes acts right or wrong, and understanding what their flaws (and good points) are.
- Employ the principles meant to keep the good points of each theory, and to avoid their flaws.



Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn more about ethics.

The actual doing of ethics or moral philosophy – the search for principles that characterize and determine right action, duty, obligations, good values, good people, wrong actions, evil, etc. – as opposed to the previous kind of activity of talking about the nature and logic of the search and the concepts involved in it, is what philosophers and university philosophy teachers today call normative ethics. Since this activity is what most people call simply ethics, I will dispense with the adjective normative.

It is useful to consider ethical theories about what kinds of actions are right or wrong in two types of categories to begin with: (1) theories that right actions are those actions whose consequences create or allow the greatest amount of good (or least amount of evil, or greatest balance of good over evil), and (2) other theories – any theory which holds that what is right is not dependent upon how much good (or how little evil) is created, but on other things – things which the theory will explain or describe. At first look, theories of the first sort – call them, say, "good-requiring" theories – perhaps seem the most obviously reasonable, but let me give some examples of cases of the second sort so that you can see

what plausibility they themselves have. People who would be more inclined to hold one of the second kind of theories would be those who might follow a set of rules like the ten commandments, regardless of the consequences following those rules might bring, or people who believe that you should always obey the law, even if you think a law is a bad one or that some harm or evil will result in following it. ("If you think a law is a bad one," they usually say, "then get it changed" – as if you could – "but until it is changed, you ought to obey it.") Examples of other kinds of principles of this second sort are the Golden Rule in either of its forms – (1) do unto others as you would have them do unto you; or (2) do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you – and the philosopher Immanuel Kant's principle that you should only do what you could will that everyone should do (popularly usually expressed rhetorically as "What if everybody did that?"). None of these rules have any reference to whether following them will turn out to give the greatest good in the long run or not, though in some cases I think it is assumed (though probably incorrectly) that using them properly will bring about the greatest amount of good or presupposes (as in using Kant's principle or the Golden Rule) that you will choose the alternative that will.

I will call theories of the first sort "good-requiring" and those of the second sort "formal" or "procedural" rule theories, this latter because following the procedure or form of the rule, not looking at consequences, makes the determination for you of what is right or not. (For those who might take a philosophy course, philosophers call "good-requiring" theories ***Consequentialist (also called 'teleological') principles and theories of ethics,*** "formal rule" theories and ***Non-consequentialist (also called deontological) principles and theories of ethics***, but I shall not use those somewhat foreboding and generally undescriptive terms here.)

Good-requiring Principles

These are any principles which say an act is right if and only if, of all the acts that are possible for the person in question, its consequences create the most good, least evil, or greatest balance

of good over evil. The following are three categories of good requiring principles, derived from their different answers to the question of who ought to most benefit from the good that they require to be done:

(1) the agent performing the act? – the theory called "egoism";

(2) everyone other than the agent performing the act? – altruism; or,

(3) everyone; or at least the majority or greatest number? – ***utilitarianism***.

Also, consider the question of what things are good. There have been serious attempts to show that there is ultimately only one good – one and only one final good toward which all other goods are only a means, but which it itself is an end. This, it is argued, is pleasure or happiness or contentment. (Though these three words perhaps mean somewhat different things, what I am interested in saying about theories claiming that any or all of them, or other similar things, are the only ultimate good will apply equally to all; so any specific distinctions between them will be unimportant here.) Such a theory of the ultimate goal and value of life – joy, contentment, happiness, pleasure, etc. – is called a hedonistic one.

Now, except for categorizing theories, the names of the theories are not important, though the contents of the theories are, since many hold or have held various forms of these theories. We can have "egoistic hedonistic" theories of ethics –***Ethical hedonism*** theories that say everyone should act for his or her own greatest happiness (not just good, but the specific good happiness; we can have "altruistic hedonistic" theories of ethics – theories that you should act for other people's happiness; and we can have utilitarian hedonistic theories of ethics such as those of John Stuart Mill or Jeremy Bentham which hold that one should always act to promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number. And, apart from hedonism, there can be egoistic, altruistic, or utilitarian theories designating for whom one ought to increase those good or rewarding benefits that include things besides happiness or

pleasure, in case happiness or pleasure is not the only ultimate good.

I will say nothing much about altruism in the sense that I use it here, meaning a principle requiring one always to ignore one's own good and to think only of the good of others. That is because I think everyone owes themself, simply because they too are a human being, some consideration; the question is simply how much. Why should other people, just because they are not you, be considered by you to be more important than you, or why should their good or happiness be considered by you to be of more value than yours! And why should you consider, as this theory of ethics would require, another person to be of more worth than you allow them to consider themself! The theory or principle, as stated here, would hold that you must always take their good into consideration but they should never do so; and they must always place your welfare first, but you should never do so.

Egoism

Let me first consider one particular argument given for ***ethical egoism*** – the principle that one ought to do what will bring about one's own greatest good, least bad, or greatest balance of good over bad – and for ethical egoistic hedonism – the same theory but where good is considered specifically to be pleasure or happiness, and bad is considered to be pain or sorrow, etc. This is the argument derived from their psychological counterparts, ***psychological egoism*** and ***psychological hedonism***, psychological theories which say that people only can act for their own (perceived) greatest interests or happiness. And since one can only be obligated to act in a way that one can act, these theories about how people do and must act leads directly to the ethical theories about how they should act. The contention is that since people are psychologically required to act in ways they perceive to be in their own best interests (or that will give them the most pleasure), that is the (only) way they can ethically be required to act; to require anything else ethically of people is to require the impossible and so is not a really legitimate, realistic, or meaningful ethical principle.

Criticism: It is true one can only be morally obligated to do what is possible; but it is not true that it is impossible to act unselfishly. And in many cases, it is not even difficult to act unselfishly. If this is the case, as I will argue shortly, psychological egoism and hedonism, since they are false theories of human nature, cannot justify ethical egoism or hedonism, theories about human obligation. People do, in fact, act altruistically, at least some people do, at least some of the time. People can act unselfishly; many often do. Altruism, in the sense of taking the welfare of others into consideration, and even sometimes putting it above one's own welfare – whether that welfare is in terms of happiness or some other good – is not an impossible human attribute. People can and do act in regard for others, act in ways that they know or believe will cause less good to themselves than they could otherwise get; but they act that way because they know or believe that it will cause more good for others and that sometimes that is better or more important.

Many teachers, for example, have done extra work for their students' benefit, not for their own benefit. Many people do extra things for others even when it is an inconvenience to themselves. Parents, for example, often do unselfish things for their children. They may work harder so that their kids have the extra opportunities occasioned by greater wealth; they may give their children their time and energy to teach them, chauffeur them, chaperon them, or to listen to them about matters of little consequence or interest in themselves, even though it may not cause the parent any great joy or pleasure and even though it may be boring, tedious, or sacrificial of their time or energy that would otherwise be spent on personally fonder projects.

And any argument that tries to show these people believe they will get more pleasure out of acting altruistically and are therefore really acting in, and because of, their own self-interest after all, shows little understanding of human nature in such matters. Of course, there are selfish acts done by people for others so that they themselves will receive a benefit or honor or feel better or have their consciences assuaged, but not all acts are like that, and not

all people act selfishly like that. In many cases of altruistic acts or of self-sacrificing utilitarian acts there is no particular benefit expected or perceived to be gained by the agent performing the act. And if one does get pleasure out of an unselfish act, that pleasure is usually the result and not the cause of one's doing something selflessly. Furthermore, in cases where there is some pleasure for the agent, it is usually hardly sufficient pleasure to have balanced the amount of selfish pleasure sacrificed.

(More about this shortly.) To repeat, not all acts have much to do with the agent's expecting to receive any or sufficiently rewarding pleasure for his or her deeds; nor do they have much to do with the agent's actually receiving any or sufficient benefit for them; and even when some pleasure does also result for the agent, it is just that – an accompanying result – and not the cause of his or her performing the act.

For example, when you root for a sports hero, a movie hero, kidnap victim, politician, or whomever, you do it because you want him or her to triumph, and then you feel good if he or she does. Unless you have placed a bet on them, you do not root for them so that you will feel good. Why should you feel good about their winning if you did not already have some sort of concern or feeling for them! Why ever root for the underdog, since by doing so you are more likely to end up feeling bad – underdogs usually lose. Why not root for the kidnapper rather than the victim if all you are concerned about is how you feel! Why, in fact, root for anyone else at all!

In terms, not of caring about other people, but just wanting or feeling obligated to do things, I think there is a similar situation. The desire or perception of duty arises first, and the pleasure, if any, follows from successfully doing what you want or believe you should. I think that in general we get pleasure out of doing the things we want to because we were already in the mood to do them and were able to; we do not do them because we anticipate some sort of pleasure resulting from doing them. The mood or desire

generally has to come first, or there will not even be any pleasure resulting from doing the act.

Now there are some cases or times we do things or want things for the pleasure we anticipate from doing or having them. For example, one may want to get drunk just to see if it is as great as others often say; one may want to go to a party, not because one is in a partying mood, but because one feels he or she may have a good time if they go; one may want to have sex with another just to see whether it will be good. These cases do not always give much happiness though – not with the kind of frequency that doing or getting something you really already want to do or to get does. Further, these cases simply are rarer than going to a party because you are in a partying mood, getting drunk because you have the urge to drink or to "feel no pain", or having sex simply because you really want to with the person you are with at that time. If you simply think about the cases where you want to do something, I think you will see that generally the mood is prior to any anticipation of pleasure, and that often there is a mood, desire, or craving to do something without any real (conscious) anticipation of pleasure at all. Sometimes you may even actually anticipate a disappointment or letdown because you are aware of how important the act or thing simply seems to you.

One of my best students one time, disbelieving this, argued that he quite often did things for some pleasure he believed he would get. I thought he was wrong about himself, so I asked him to pick something specific that he felt that way about. He mentioned water skiing, or at least his numerous futile attempts to water ski. He was a big fellow, and for a long time he had been unsuccessfully attempting to water ski. He had even bought a power boat so that he and his wife and friends could get on the lake whenever they wanted, particularly so that he might ski. He really wanted to water ski, but he had never been able to do it. He had even broken tow ropes in his unsuccessful attempts to get up on the water on his skis. Up to that point, he had only been successful at letting his wife and friends ski while he drove the boat. Alas. But he still wanted to

water ski. I asked him why he wanted to, feeling I already knew the answer and that it was not what he thought.

"Well," he said, "I see all these other people doing it and they look like they are having so much fun, I would like to experience the fun they are having; I want to do it so that I get the pleasure out of it they do." "But earlier in the class tonight," I reminded him, "you said you have often been at parties where you watched people eat things like oysters, and though they seemed to really enjoy it, you hadn't the slightest desire to try the oysters. Eating oysters did not strike you as being enticing, regardless of how much fun others seem to have doing it." "But I like water skiing." "No, you don't. You have never even been able to do it. You don't even know whether you will like it or not if you are ever able to do it."

"Well, I would like it – I like being able to go fast on the water with the wet spray and all."

"But you can do that in your boat; there is no need to satisfy the urge for that by having to get out on skis; you can have that sort of fun or pleasure in your boat. In fact, except for slaloming or some such, you cannot go any faster on your skis than you can in your boat; and if your boat has much power, you can probably even go much faster in it than would be safe for anyone to try water skiing behind it."

"Well, then, why do I want to water ski.""I don't know why; but I do know that you do want to. And I suspect that it is because you want to so badly, and it has been so difficult to learn, that if you ever are able to do it successfully, you will probably be very happy about it. Your desire will, if ever fulfilled, cause you great pleasure. The thought of the pleasure does not bring about your desire."

Attractions to people are often like this too. I think often there is no (known) reason for a particular attraction to someone just as there is no (known) reason for a particular desire to do something. Further we often are attracted to people, or desirous of things or activities, we intellectually know make us miserable. We do not

always seem to want or like things, or people, for the pleasure they might bring.

Further, if we did, would it not be more reasonable to delay things like eating or sleeping when just a little hungry or tired, in order to build up the desire so that the pleasure would be even greater when achieved. But we do not act that way usually. Of course, in some areas like sex we do sometimes delay gratification by prolonging foreplay so that the pleasure will be even more pleasurable, but that is also partly at least because the delaying tactics of prolonged play are themselves pleasurable and because we may be in the mood for such play and such delay. But even in sex there are limits to what kinds of things and delays one would go through just to make the end more pleasurable.

And in most activities, though, like writing, editing, and revising this book (or the class notes I hand out to my students so that they can listen, reflect, and respond or seek clarification in class rather than unthinkingly and busily taking faulty, illegible, unintelligible notes, perhaps about things they are not really following) there are many other ways I could have more pleasurably and profitably spent my time. Working over this as a book, not knowing whether it will be published, profitable, read, or helpful to anyone, I am hardly writing it because it is fun to do so; it is not; writing in a case like this, where it is to some general sort of audience without particular questions or comments to respond to and where there is no feedback as I proceed, is most tedious and laborious for me. And I am not learning much myself by doing it because the insights (have) come while thinking about and discussing the topic (which I still find fascinating after many years), not from organizing and writing down in book form what I already think. I am writing this because I believe the ideas I have developed and attained in thinking and reading about relationships should be passed on to others who have the same kinds of questions, concerns, and ideas I had. I hope it can spare them some of the trials, fears, worries, embarrassments, and mistakes I have made, and I hope it can help them have the framework I and others lacked to better understand and evaluate

their own experiences, values, ideas, and ideals. I had many of the ideas I am writing here while corresponding about or discussing particular issues with friends. Discovering and sharing the ideas at the time was most enjoyable, but organizing all the material into book form and writing for an unknown and abstract audience is definitely not fun for me.

And to anyone who argues people only do unpleasant things for the pleasure they will get later, that certainly does not apply to working on this book. Certainly I will be glad when this is finished, but that is because it is not fun to do; and it is always nice to stop doing or to finish things that are not much fun. But I am not doing it so that I will feel good when it is done. If I, or anyone, were to do things for reasons like that, we would go about driving splinters up our fingernails or hitting our heads with hammers so that it would feel good to stop. And certainly I will be glad if this book helps anyone, but that little bit of gladness and pride could have been easily overridden by, say, a few more hours on the tennis court, at the violin, reading a good book, spending time with my wife and children, doing photography or building up my photography business, or doing any of a number of other things that are more pleasurable, rewarding, and satisfying than doing this is. I am writing this because I believe it can benefit others in important ways, not because I will get more joy out of benefitting others with this book than I could get spending the time it took to write it in other ways.

Why we sometimes root for some particular person or want to help another person, I do not know. Perhaps there is just some sort of empathy, sympathy, or concern out of "chemistry" for them. Perhaps we feel they are deserving because we believe them to be good or innocent people. At any rate, people can, and do, often have feelings of benevolence for others, not just feelings for themselves. And often these feelings of benevolence for others, or recognition of others' just deserts, outweigh feelings we have for our own regard.

Two examples of this are the desire we have to see future

generations be benefitted, even though it might cost us something to bestow that benefit, and Gordie Howe's remark in an interview after he scored his monumental 800th professional career hockey goal that he hoped others would someday break his record because it was such a great feeling to break a record like this one that lots of people should be able to experience it.

And another kind of case that seems to me to demonstrate that not all actions by everyone are selfishly motivated, is that in which people respect the (prior) rights of others (such as keeping promises to them, paying debts to them, etc.) even though they might be better off or happier were they not to do so. For example, when you let someone else alone because they are studying or sleeping, even though you would love to talk to them and know they would converse with you. Or when you nicely allow someone to finish watching a television show they have been watching, even though that will cause you to miss part of a show you want to watch; you recognize their right simply because they were there first. Even a larger group who wants to watch another program will often recognize an individual's or smaller groups right in this kind of case.

Of course, there are some people who are egoists – who often or only act for their perceived own best interests or pleasure, and who, in some cases, think they are justified in acting that way. But it is hardly a universal or even very typical trait. I know only a few people who act that way, and even those people seem to act that way for two different reasons. Some of them seem totally unaware of other people's needs, whereas others seem to be aware of them but not to care about them or to consider them.

The first sort of person is like a child who wants your full attention when they have something to tell you and simply cannot understand how you could be too busy with something else to meet with them. It is the kind of person who says hurtful things without even realizing it, who misses appointments without even calling to let you know they are not coming, and who expects you to keep appointments they have not mentioned to you but only thought

about themselves. It is the kind of person who picks up and handles fragile and important items in your home or office, plays with them, and just sets them down roughly, precariously, or anywhere without even noticing your eyes about to bug out of your head. And it is the kind of person who lets their children run amuck in stores because they do not want to hurt their feelings. I worked at a place one time as a photographer where there was no lock on the darkroom door, and the boss occasionally would just sort of look in to see what was happening. Even though he had been a photographer in his younger days, the idea that someone else might be developing film in the darkroom and need to have the door remained closed never seemed to occur to him. Such behavior seems more self-absorbed than mean or uncharitable.

Though some people of this sort would immediately apologize if they realized they were hurting, disturbing, or annoying you, some of them are also people who would not change how they behaved even if you made them aware they were bothering you – some of them would even get angry with you for asking them to curb their children, not handle your fragile possessions, or take more than a minute to drop what you are doing to be attentive to them. They are the kind of person who instead of begging your pardon when they step on your foot would instead comment on how big your feet were or how much room you seemed to need for them. Some people even get violent sometimes, and then blame you for provoking them, because you refuse some unreasonable request or desire they wanted you to fulfill, even though you refused it politely. And, of course, there are a few relatively rare people who behave in intentionally hurtful ways without caring about it.

Most people, however, are not self-centered or egoistic. They help their friends, neighbors, and often strangers even at some inconvenience to themselves. They try to lend a hand when they see a need. And they certainly do not try to hurt or walk over innocent people, though it might be to their benefit to do so. Not all businessmen are so motivated by hunger for profit that they terminate longtime loyal employees just because those employees

are not as efficient or productive as they once were. Egoism is hardly a universal trait, as the theory of psychological egoism holds. And I see no reason that it should be cultivated to become one. So insofar as ethical egoism depends for its justification on psychological egoism, it is unjustified.

Now there is some merit to ethical egoism, it seems, in that one should at least take into consideration one's own self-interest, and one should not always be denying oneself. But I think one also needs to consider others; and most people do. As one of my students pointed out one time, if he had food to give away to others who needed it, he would.

This prompted another student to ask him whether he would give away food to others if he himself was hungry and did not have enough to share. And if not, was he not then an egoist after all?

First of all, sometimes acting in your own best interest, even selfishly, would not make you a psychological egoist in the sense the theory describes. Being an egoist means you act in your own perceived best interest always, not just some times. Ethical egoism would require you to keep the food for yourself if you needed it, but so might some other theories of what is right.

For example, it seems to me there might be a theory that the most deserving person should have the food, and you might be the most deserving person – which would not only make it right for you to keep it, but might make it obligatory for another person to give it to you if they had it instead. Under egoism, they should keep their own food, just as you should keep your own food, though you each could try to steal the other's food. Or if everyone is equally deserving, and only one can benefit from the food, a theory might require that whoever already has it should keep it. Or a theory might hold that though one has certain (lesser) obligations to others, one does not owe others one's own life; it might hold that it would be permissible and saintly to sacrifice one's life for one or more deserving others, but not obligatory.

Total Altruism

A strictly altruistic principle would require you to give your food to another and for him to give it back to you. Neither of you should eat it but each should insist the other should. So that principle seems not even workable for this kind of situation. Altruism seems to require everyone else to be more important than the agent; but since everyone is an agent, everyone must always, in essence, be doing favors for others and not let others do favors for them in return.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism says that the greatest number should benefit, so that if you had enough food for one person your size on the one hand or for two or three smaller people on the other, you should give it to the smaller people. But utilitarianism does not take into account anyone's merit; it just takes into account their numbers. Suppose you had packed food for the trip and had advised the others to do so as well, but they had all ignored your warning. Suppose further that the two or more smaller people were not as nice as you or had not led as good and contributing a life as you had so far. Perhaps they then do not deserve your food and you are not obligated to give it to them.

At the beginning of each course I teach on ethics, I present my students with a hypothetical thought-experiment merely for its value in stimulating important ethical reflections, not because it is realistic, (though it bears a striking resemblance to an ethical dilemma I will describe later that was reportedly faced by some British officials during World War II). The thought- experiment is the following dilemma. Imagine that, like in one of those old time peril movies, you are at the switch of a train track. Your spouse or your baby is tied securely to the track, and if you switch the oncoming train to go that way, your spouse or baby will be killed. (The sarcastic remark I add is that if it is your spouse, you have only been married a short time so you still love him or her). However, if you switch the train to the other track, you will force it to go over a destroyed bridge, thousands of feet above jagged rocks and a raging current. There are one hundred people on this train (you do

not know who they are; they may be friends, convicts, politicians, strangers, or just any normal, random group of people), and they all will be killed if you divert the train over the broken bridge. There are no other alternatives open to you; you will either save your loved one at the expense of the one hundred people or you will save the one hundred people at the sacrifice of your loved one. What should you do, and why? Not what will you do, but what should you do? One other thing is that you know which way the switch is set already, so leaving it that way is to choose one of the alternatives, knowing which one you have chosen; you cannot just leave the decision to fate, chance, or God; trying to do so by not deciding does not remove your responsibility for choosing which happens. As with my class, I will discuss this case after I have presented all the general information about ethical principles that I think important to understand before getting into specific, somewhat complex cases like this one.

[Regarding the British case during World War II, there is a purported story that British officials knew ahead of time about the German bombing raid on Coventry. But they knew about it because they had broken the most elaborate secret code the Germans had; and in order to insure that the Germans continued using that code for their most important messages the British could not do anything to give evidence they had access to it. Warning the citizens of Coventry to evacuate before the air raid would have risked alerting the Germans. So the decision was made to let Coventry endure the bombing raid without particularly early warning. Some of the people who knew of the raid had family and friends in Coventry, but warning them would have risked losing access to this most valuable code. Hence, they were put in the position of deciding between, on the one hand, obedience to country and possibly to the greater good of the greater number in the long run, or on the other hand, the immediate safety of their loved ones.]

Hedonism: Pleasure or Happiness As the Ultimate or Only Good

I want to argue extensively here that happiness, pleasure, or

contentment, etc. are not, and are not even really considered to be by most people, the only or ultimate goods in life, though they are at least one form or kind of good.

(1) If happiness were our goal and if we could get it by pills, drugs, drinking, or by living on the kind of planet describe in one Star Trek episode, where residents had everything they wanted but only as illusions in their minds, then we would choose to live that way. But by and large, we would not choose that kind of life.

(2) If we thought happiness would be best for our children to have and we wanted the best for them, we could and should teach them, say, to be happy drinking beer and watching tv every night and we would secure them enough skill for them to get an easy job that will allow them to do that in the evenings. We would teach them to be insensitive to others and the needs, suffering, or desires of others so that they would not be hurt by the problems of others or have to spend time taking other people's feelings into consideration in cases that were not in their own best interests. But it is repugnant to us to teach our children to be like that even though we do want what is best for them and even though we do want them to be happy. Hence, it is not happiness alone that we want them to have. We also want them to have sensitivity toward others, to have the desire to strive to achieve their full potentials toward good, honest, and/or worthwhile goals, whether those goals are intellectual, creative, physical, artistic, social, or whatever. The happiness we want our children (and ourselves) to have is that which is reserved, earned, and attained in some desirable or right way.

(3) In line psychologically with what I said earlier about seeking happiness, as Bishop Joseph Butler held over 200 years ago (Butler, 1726), happiness is not a goal, but a resulting side-effect or by-product of striving for or reaching our goals (and, I would add, of sometimes just doing things we like, without necessarily having a goal: dancing, walking, playing in the sand, concentrating on a puzzle, problem, or something else we find exciting or challenging, etc.). We do not desire food because it would make us happy, but

because we are hungry. We do not desire water to make us happy but to quench our thirst. I would argue similarly about sex and seduction: an attempted seduction which operates by promising happiness as the end of the sexual encounter will almost always fail, and justifiably so. To succeed, seduction must first get the seducee in the mood for sex, however one might do that, and then take advantage of the mood. To just talk about how much fun it would be if only the other person would cooperate does not tend to be very enticing. They already know it might be fun, or that it might be fun if they were interested. But if they are not interested, it would not perhaps be fun. And even if it would be, that idea, by itself, is not sufficient stimulus to interest them.

In reverse, to get a would-be seducer to enjoy your company when you have no inclination toward having sex at that time, you have to change the seducer's mood to one of being satisfied by companionship, conversation, sympathetic understanding, or something else. You have to change the seducer's mood because just providing or offering something else to someone who wants sex will neither intrigue nor satisfy them. The mood is what determines what will cause happiness; considerations of happiness do not generally cause the mood.

Little kids that want something can often be satisfied by giving them something else, but only if you make that something else seem more interesting to them than the original object of their desire. If you do not (or if it does not seem more interesting to them just on its own), they will not accept it as a substitute. Adults are not unlike children in this way.

(4) The thought or anticipation of happiness resulting from a contemplated activity, even when you have such a thought, is rarely a goad to action. For example, writing a term paper or some such is not motivated by knowing how great it will feel to be done, no matter how bad you may already feel about not starting it. When I used to have to write papers, I took a break every chance I could – as a break that I deserved when I had done some small amount of

work, and as a break I needed when I had not been able to do any work.

Mental activity, as well as physical activity, reflects Butler's point too. When I was in the ninth grade, I was fascinated by algebra; it seemed like some kind of magic. I thought it was fantastic and would come home in the afternoons and study ahead in the algebra book for hours. I loved working out word problems, seeing new relationships, etc., and the total concentration on the ideas involved made me happy or, actually, oblivious to almost anything else. Some of my happiest hours during my high school years were spent learning about algebra. But that happiness was because of the absorbing concentration and the insights and mental gymnastics involved; I liked algebra for those things, and they made me happy because I liked those things. I did not like those things because they made me happy. It would be silly to think every high school student would be as happy studying algebra as I was. Hedonists have the cause and the (side-) effects backwards.

In his book Ethics, William Frankena lists a number of things (pp. 87,88) besides happiness which have been claimed to be good, things perhaps necessary to some extent for the good life, such as life itself and conscious activity, health and strength, knowledge, aesthetic experience, morally good dispositions or virtues, love, friendship, cooperation, just distribution of goods and evils, freedom, security, adventure and novelty, good reputation, etc. I would want to stress or add to this list the maximization of one's capabilities to create, discover, recognize and enjoy or appreciate goodness, beauty, and truth.

Also, some of the things mentioned above, such as health, and some of the things mentioned in the book Ethics for Today, by Titus and Keeton (Titus 1976) – freedom, right to work, education (meaning schooling, and not necessarily learning) – strike me as important, not as particular good ends in themselves, but only as means to more important things, such as fulfillment of potential, athletic excellence, leisure time one could devote to enjoyable

interests, etc. With regard to health, for example, when I was a terrified college freshman I used to do better on chemistry exams when I was ill than when I was well. When I was ill I was less self- conscious about, or threatened by, doing poorly, was more relaxed, and thus did better. When I was well I had no excuse for doing poorly, and this helped intimidate me so much that I did poorly just out of intense nervousness on the first two exams. Many people have written impressive books while ill, recuperating from injury, ailment, or surgery, or while in prison. Being ill may even respectably allow you the time or frame of mind to do some worthwhile things you may not be able to do while having to do the daily tasks and chores expected of normally healthy and free people. Sometimes being ill in certain ways turns out to be a "blessing in disguise" – turns out to be a benefit. Good health is not necessarily a good end just of itself.

There is a comment in Ethics for Today about how insufficient sleep is responsible for quarrels, irritability, nastiness, etc. I think is only partially true, if at all. A good person who knows about right acts is not going to be nasty or irritable just because sleepy, ill, frustrated, or bored; only people already disposed toward bad behavior are going to act badly when tired, sick, bored, etc. A good person will explain he is too tired, upset, or ill to function well or will simply withdraw when in such a state, or will make a redoubled effort to be good, nice, understanding, tolerant, etc. One of the academic counselors I used to work with made a special effort to be patient with students when she noticed herself getting exasperated and impatient after a succession of difficult students. She said it really paid off for the later students and for her own returned enthusiasm and interest in her work.

At any rate, to strive toward one's potential for creating, discovering, and appreciating good, beauty, and truth seem to me to be (one of) the prime good(s) in life and the right way to live, even though it may not bring happiness in the normal sense of the word. It may bring a fulfillment and peace; or it may bring frustration, anguish, and torment (particularly in this imperfect world); but still

it seem better than an unfulfilled, un- actualized, insipid, inane, empty contentment or happiness. It may be great for a dog to live a "dog's life" – having its needs met, doing little but loving its master, and lying about or frolicking around all day; but that does not seem to me to be much of a life for a person. In the book *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (1962) writes about what the good life is for a person, and he incorporates his notion of an excellent life into an interesting, and significant definition of happiness. "Happiness is an activity of the soul in conformity with excellence" (p. 17). I would add that it is not only conformity with excellence (often translated as "virtue" but not meaning what we today call virtue, but simply meaning "excellence"), but also the pursuit of excellence that brings the kind of contentment or self-fulfillment – at least while one is actively mentally engaged in the pursuit – which I think Aristotle might have had in mind in this sense of "happiness".

Aristotle also pointed out that much of happiness, in the normal sense of the word, was the result of luck; and still it seems to be; the circumstances of your birth, your education, your associations, the stability and form of your country's government and other influences on you, and, in business, the vagaries of the market. Read almost any success story and you will see, even with the most careful planning, elements of luck playing a huge part. Or read, if you can find them, stories of failure, and often you will find the same brilliance and same amount of planning, and simply bad luck or bad timing, or just lack of good luck, contributing heavily to the failure. Being caught or spared in a (natural) disaster not of your own making is certainly luck; sometimes being part of a company or business venture that becomes very successful, or that fails, is; winning one of these huge lotteries is certainly a matter of luck. Prosperity, luck, happiness are all things that help make life better, but they are not things totally within your control, not in the way your choice of actions, efforts, and intentions is. A totally good life requires luck as well as moral behavior; people cannot control their luck (just in some cases their odds), but the parts of the good life

people can control are their behaving reasonably, in accord with moral principles, and their having morally good intentions.

And there can be a certain satisfaction in that and in the rightly attempted pursuit of the totally good life, even when that pursuit falls short of its goal because of circumstances outside of your control. Baseball player Pete Rose's comments after the sixth game of the Boston-Cincinnati World Series (Boston finally won the thrilling game that had numerous tremendous plays and dramatic opportunities to win by both teams) probably illustrate this in part. Asked whether he felt bad they (Cincinnati) had lost, he said "No; it was just such a tremendous thrill to have been part of such a great game, one in which both teams played so well, it was hardly sad to lose." And often, even in sports, it is somehow more gratifying to do your best and lose to a superior performance than it is to win when you are not playing very well. Of course, it is best to have a great performance that also wins over another great performance. And Rose has said (1985), regardless of the satisfaction of playing well or the disappointment of playing poorly, baseball is, just in terms of fun, much more fun when you win, regardless of how well or poorly you played. Life and sports both have both dimensions – doing your best and being fortunate; and the only part you have any control of at all is doing your best; which can give you a certain amount of satisfaction or peace even if it is not accompanied by fortune that brings you fun or happiness.

Of course, self-fulfillment may bring happiness and may be accompanied by good fortune. I am simply arguing that it is an important good even if it does not. And certainly there are easier ways to attain happiness or at least enjoyment. For example, I was just as happy (perhaps even happier) listening to rock music when I was in junior high school and high school as I am now listening to symphonic music and opera arias. Nevertheless, I believe that, in general, opera is better than rock – not because it is more enjoyable, but because it requires more faculties than just our emotions or "surface" listening; and because it is much harder to perform well,

and somewhat harder to appreciate well. Good music (of whatever sort) requires more skills than just being able to write or hear a simple, strong beat or simple lyrics. It requires more skill and more concentration, and it contains more to appreciate on different levels, or more elements that are satisfying to different faculties. There may be intellectually satisfying stylistic elements, apart from the listening pleasure.

John Stuart Mill thought that the so-called higher pleasures are in some way more pleasurable than lower or ordinary ones. I disagree. I think they are not more pleasurable (consider a sad, tragic play, or detailed drama or opera requiring total concentration, particularly in a hot, stuffy theater), but nonetheless they are better because they require more skill to create, more skill to appreciate, and because they offer so much more to experience and savor to those who can. It is not so much that they are necessarily more fun, but that they are more interesting and stimulating to those who can appreciate them.

Utilitarianism

I believe utilitarianism should be rejected when meant in terms of the greatest happiness for the greatest number since, as already argued, happiness is not and should not be our most cherished goal, though happiness arrived at in good or right ways may sometimes be something to be cherished. But utilitarianism should also be partially rejected, or accepted only with reservations, when it is stated as "an act is right if and only if its consequences cause the greatest good (or least evil, or greatest balance of good over evil) (whatever the good or evil might be) for the greatest number, compared to any other act available to the agent." I will explain and argue for this partial rejection momentarily. A good thing about utilitarianism though is that at least it shows a recognition and concern for the good of others (as one should) rather than just one's own good as ethical egoism argues.

Notice, also, that both egoism and utilitarianism are correctly expressed in terms of doing what is the best for the agent or the

greatest number, not just in terms of doing what the agent (person performing the act) thinks is best. What a person thinks is best and therefore thinks is right is not always what actually is best or right. An act that an agent thinks will cause the greatest balance of good over evil may in fact not cause that greatest balance. Now it may be an excuse for a person doing something that does not provide the greatest good over evil, that he honestly and reasonably thought it would. But we still might want to say such a person did the wrong thing, no matter how well-intentioned and reasonable he was, and no matter how honorable and good he and his motives were. There is a difference between good intentions (or good people) and right acts. Hence, the criteria for determining what is right or wrong must refer to events and/or consequences in the world, not to what someone thinks they are or will be. If criteria for right and wrong depended upon what the agents thought would cause the greater balance of good over evil, then the mother who poisoned her child when she thought she was giving her medicine could not be said to have done the wrong thing. (Remember, in saying she did the wrong thing, we are not necessarily, and not at all in this case, saying she did something for which she is to be blamed, chastised, or punished.) Or you would have to say

something strange like, "she did the right thing when she gave her child poison believing it to be medicine, but it was the wrong thing as soon as she found the child dead and realized her mistake." Actually, it was the wrong thing the whole time, though she may have only discovered it was the wrong thing later. Similarly one might do something wrong, thinking it to be right, and never find out the error. Conversely, one may do something intending to cause evil, and accidentally end up causing good, such as the case mentioned earlier of the would-be assassin who botches the attempt but alters his intended victim's schedule by it in a way that thwarts a later independent and more probably successful attempt by someone else. Or a ruthless boss might maliciously fire an honest employee only to drive him to find a better job that he otherwise would not have sought or found. In such cases we might condemn

the assailant or the boss but say what they did was (or ended up) a good (or the best) thing. They did what turned out to be right despite their intentions and attempt to do otherwise. The criteria that egoism and utilitarianism state for an act's being right or wrong are correctly stated insofar as they refer to consequences in fact, not just what the agent thinks the consequences will be. We might want to say of the mother who poisons her child accidentally because she has tended the child beyond her endurance that she was a well-intentioned mother and a good person, but that she did the wrong thing, and that it was disastrous, even though she may be excused or absolved. Good and intelligent people with laudable motivation and conscientious thought can still do the wrong thing. Doing the wrong thing is not always a poor reflection on someone's character, ability, intelligence, or motives.

The following eleven kinds of cases, however, are at least some of the kinds of cases in which I believe utilitarianism gives, or can give, the wrong answer about what is the right thing to do, since in such cases there are (possibly overriding) factors to consider beyond just the value or good of the consequences.

(1) Cases of breaking a promise or not repaying a debt because some greater good would result from such behavior. Suppose, for example, you agree or promise to meet your wife somewhere for dinner and on the way there you run into some old friends (or an old flame) who wants you to have some drinks with them. If you do, the total good or fun for all of you may outweigh your wife's anger, disappointment, worry, etc., at being stood up. Nevertheless, it seems that not keeping the appointment, in this case, would be wrong. Similarly with regard to not repaying a financial debt simply because you need the money more or could put the money to better use and benefit than could the person to whom you owe it.

(2) Some cases of punishment. Many people argue, erroneously I think, that a criminal should not be punished for committing a past crime since it will not deter future criminals and since the consequences of such punishment include the criminal's suffering,

and therefore bring less good (more suffering) into the world than would the alternative of not punishing him. The cry is often heard "What good will punishing him do!"

Now I agree that in cases where there are sincere remorse and repentance and where ample restitution can be made and is made, and particularly, where there were mitigating circumstances in the crime in the first place, perhaps punishment should not be imposed. But there are crimes (such as cold-blooded murder) where restitution is not possible, where repentance is not found, where grievous wrong is not recognized or accepted by the guilty (actually guilty, and not just convicted) person, and where there were no mitigating circumstances; and I think in some of these cases punishment is warranted – not because it will do any good, but because the person to whom it is properly applied has earned it by doing something wrong that he does not care about and cannot right. It seems there are certain things, like cold-blooded murder, for example, that a person ought to know better than to commit and that if they do commit it then (unless there is some excusing or overriding circumstance) they in some way forfeit their right to have their highest good considered in society's making decisions about their deserved fate. It is not sufficient to say that the guilty should be pardoned because they will never do such a thing again; rather they should be punished simply because they have inexcusably done it in the first place, have not atoned for it, and/or have not, will not, or cannot make restitution. Punishment may be a deterrent to wrong behavior, but deterrence is not its main point. Further, there are other kinds of deterrents besides punishment; anything which prevents a person from committing some crime or wrong is a deterrent. For example, good safes are a deterrent to theft; police visibility, good street lighting, and populated public places are a deterrent to rape and mugging. Punishment (like its counterpart, reward) is not something that looks to the future, but something that looks to the past, for its desert. If we were to punish only those people who will do things that are wrong, we need to catch them before they do it, not after; on utilitarian grounds, a person getting

ready to commit murder deserves punishment only if you catch him before he does it. If he can do it before you catch him, and honestly never intend to do it again, you should let him go (or, if you want to set him as an example to discourage other criminals tell the press he has been punished though he has not). (Also, by restitution in cases where it applies, such as theft or destruction of property, I do not mean paying back just the amount stolen or damaged. If A steals B's car, then the amount of restitution should include the value of the car plus at least whatever other tangible and intangible costs and inconveniences B and others, such as the police, incurred because of the missing car.) (In the case of reward, on utilitarian grounds you would only need to give a reward to people who will be enticed to do good by it – before they do it; you needn't reward people for good they have just done, but for the good you hope they will do. If there is someone who continually does what is right and who you know will continue to do so because of the kind of conscience and conscientiousness he or she has, on utilitarian grounds there would be no reason ever to give them a reward, no matter how much good they do. Hence the better a person someone is, the less they ought to be rewarded.)

(3) Cases of "punishing" innocent people. Like the story of the over-protective mother who tells the first-grade teacher that if her child misbehaves just to slap the child next to him and that will teach her child a lesson. Realistic cases of this sort would be like the following: supposing it was true that public punishment of criminals did deter future crime, then some might argue that such public punishments (or tortures) ought to be inflicted upon people, known only by the authorities to be innocent, when the real culprits cannot be found, in order to deter others from committing similar crimes. If you cannot find the real criminal, then pick up some poor derelict or some such, pin the crime on him, imprison or hang him, and keep potential criminals from committing crimes. Making an example out of an innocent person that no one in the public knows is innocent would work just as well as a deterrent as would making an example

out of a guilty person. It would also make law enforcement work much easier since it would generally be easier to apprehend (and frame) innocent people than to apprehend and convict criminals who try to get away and hide.

The utilitarians who in case (2) above ask what good it would do to punish guilty people might be wary about asking that, for if it does some good, it might also be good to punish (torture) secretly innocent people. In both cases (2) and (3), utilitarians miss the (or a major) point for punishing criminals; it has to do with giving them something they have earned by their actions in the past, not something that is done just for others to have a better future.

In saying this, I am not advocating that punishment be vengeance or retaliation since those have connotations of being irrational, subjective, and passionately vindictive. I believe that just punishment is rational and objective and can be dispensed without passion, vengeance, or vindictiveness. Any satisfaction that is achieved for justly punishing a deserving criminal is beside the point. Further, retaliation and vengeance do not take into account right or wrong, and often not even guilt or innocence. Vindictive revenge can be taken out on innocent people accidentally associated in some non-criminal way with the culprit – people of the same neighborhood, tribe, ethnic group, race, religion, family, country, etc. And it can be exacted for an act that may not have been immoral, such as non-negligent, accidental killing or killing in justifiable self-defense. Just punishment can coincide with revenge, but it does not have to; they are two separate things even when they apply to the same case.

1 – 3 above are similar in a way. Paying debts, keeping promises, and giving rewards are like punishment in that their justifications lie in the past, not the future. We reward or punish someone because of what they have done, not what they will do. We should pay back loans and keep our promises (barring overriding circumstances) because we said we would, not because there will be some future benefit.

(4) Cases of not fulfilling apparent obligations to loved ones simply because some greater good could be accomplished for a greater number (of strangers); for example, sending your child (or yourself) and four strangers to a lower quality college just because it is less expensive, instead of sending your child (or yourself) to the highest quality institution he (you) merits. This is not to say that higher quality education is necessarily more expensive, nor that one owes one's child a college education. But I do think one owes one's friends and family members some more consideration (unless there are particular overriding reasons to the contrary) than one owes strangers. Even if a college education is not one of them, apart from some special overriding reasons to the contrary, one has certain obligations to one's children simply because one voluntarily or intentionally (speaking here for argument's sake only of those cases) had the sex that conceived them and because they need adult help. In marrying someone, one takes on a special commitment or a special relationship and in part gives one's mate reason to believe they can rely on you in ways that a stranger has no right to particularly expect. Even a date implies a commitment to return (with) the person you take, to be attentive and courteous to them, and also not to cut short the expected time because you want to "late date" someone else (you may have just met); all this implying, of course, there is not some overriding circumstances that justifies behaving otherwise. And this is even if you and a bunch of others might have a better time if you go off with them and desert your date, than the time you and they will have if you do not. Greater happiness for you and your friends doesn't justify ignoring or shirking an obligation.

(5) Cases of overriding a smaller group's prior claim to something that would make a larger group better off having. For example, consider a smaller group watching a television program whose ending overlaps the beginning of another program a larger group would like to watch. For example, the first group's program is from 7 to 10 and the second group wants to watch something that begins at 9:30. This happens in dormitories, bars, homes with one television,

etc. It would be perhaps saintly or supererogatory for the smaller group to forfeit watching the end of their program to let the larger group watch the entire program they want to see; it would not be obligatory for them to do so. Yet utilitarianism would have it be an obligation.

(6) Similar to case 5, but not involving temporally prior rights – cases where a smaller group has some right to something which prevents the greatest number having the greatest good. Cases of type 3 above may also come under this. These are such cases as not being able to, say, exterminate the poor and the illiterate even if this might make it better for all future generations. It covers not letting a lynch mob have an innocent victim they want even if they may do more damage and harm if they do not get him.

It covers (and this may also fall under 4 above) cases where in sports (or perhaps even business or war) utilitarianism seems to require players for unpopular teams to surreptitiously throw a game or series so that the more popular team could win. By the time UCLA had won seven consecutive NCAA basketball titles and 9 out of 10, only their alumni, their student body and faculty, and a few misguided others were still rooting for them to beat whatever underdog they might be playing in the NCAA tournament. Yet it would hardly be right for a UCLA team member to throw a game (even secretly) just in order to make all the opponent's fans satisfied. Yet utilitarianism seems to me to demand that. Similarly, cases where a lot of Romans would like to see just a few Christians thrown to the lions. Or perhaps in our own time, cases where a lot of fans would like to see boxers or hockey players brutally fight or race car drivers slam into walls or each other in spectacular crashes.

(7) Cases involving greater good for larger numbers of inexcusably bad, or inexcusably less deserving, people versus greater good for smaller groups of (heretofore) more deserving (good) people. It seems right that the smaller group should benefit in such a case. A smaller group of good people, it seems to me, deserve to have benefits over a larger group of inexcusably bad people, even in some

cases if there is the possibility that giving the larger group the benefit might convert them to better behavior; and certainly when there is not that possibility.

(8)Cases involving an innocent agent(s) giving up something just because others are more numerous, such as the previously mentioned example from one of my students of a person's giving up food to keep others alive while he or she then dies. I think in some cases an agent has a right or at least a strong claim for his own interests simply because he is the agent, particularly if some work or sacrifice is involved. To sacrifice one's life for others is a supererogatory ("saintly) act, not an obligatory one. It is not a duty, but it is beyond the call of duty. So insofar as utilitarianism requires one to dive on a hand grenade to save one's buddies, it requires more than it should.

I say innocent agent because if one stole food from the others in the first place, he does not then particularly have the right to keep it. Or if the hand grenade is there because it is one's own and one has been negligently playing with it and needlessly endangering the lives of others, one may have at least some sort of obligation to try to save those others even at a great risk to one's self.

There is some question in ethics whether it is generally a greater duty to refrain from causing harm than to create good, or whether these are equally obligatory. One of Hippocrates' principles was that if you could do a patient no good, at least do him no harm. There are no or few laws requiring good samaritanism – requiring people to help strangers in need, but it is certainly illegal to hurt strangers for no particular reason. Yet there are others who take the view expressed in a popular slogan of the 1960's: "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem," meaning that if you are not trying to help a situation, you actually are doing harm.

This is a difficult issue involving, I suspect, many different kinds of cases and situations, some of which may require intervention and positive action but some of which may not be one's responsibility to get involved in, even if not doing so could allow some harm. For example of this latter case, I think no one has a duty to dive

on a hand grenade to protect others if that person did not cause the danger from the grenade in the first place. I think, however, the responsibility to warn someone within in earshot, by calling to them, whom you see walking unknowingly toward a "blasting area," even though you have nothing to do with the blasting, is not significantly different from the duty you have not to dynamite someone intentionally. Let me just say here that I think it is at least an equal obligation to do any positive good that requires little work or sacrifice on your part as it is to refrain from doing positive harm. As doing good requires more work or sacrifice by an agent, I think more argument or more justification is needed to show the agent would be at fault, culpable, or blameworthy for the harm caused (or the good missed) by his or her not acting in a positive manner. Part of the seemingly greater force behind the obligation to refrain from harm than behind the obligations to do good is that there is no "cost" or burden for an agent not to do harm. To do no harm requires no act at all by an agent; whereas requiring positive good does require the agent to do something and therefore imposes some burden or risk. What I am claiming here is that I think a good case could be made that as the risks or actual costs to the agent for positive action are less, and the harm or risk to innocent others for the agent's lack of such positive action are great (or the benefits to innocent or deserving others would be great), the agent has a higher obligation to take positive action. Conversely, the agent has increasingly less, if any, obligation to act as his undeserved burden is greater and/or the harm that would be done by his inaction (or the benefit brought about by his action) is less.

(9) Cases involving unfair distribution of a greater wealth rather than a fair distribution of less wealth. For example, is it better for a society to divide a little wealth equally or for it to be able to have a great wealth, but divided so that a few get great benefit, and others only a little, or much less? Utilitarianism would seem to say it is better to aim for a society where, say 1000 "value units" are spread among 100 people in a way that gives 99 of them each one and one

of them 901 than it is to aim for a society of 95 people where each of them has 10 of only 950 "value units". And even where there are the same number of people to consider and the same wealth to divide, utilitarianism does not suggest what sort of distribution is fairest.

In his book Ethics, William Frankena (op. cit.) argues that an equal distribution is to be preferred as the fairest to an unequal one. Even apart from questions then of someone's being allowed to keep (or leave to his heirs) greater wealth because he has attained it simply by working harder than others (not by being more fortunate or by luckily or shrewdly owning the right things which become more valuable as circumstances change), and even apart from questions dealing with ownership, through luck or foresight, into ownership of valuable items, such as equipment that is the means of production, I do not agree that an equal distribution of wealth or good things is always the fairest or best one. Sometimes an unequal distribution is necessary and desirable so that at least someone or some group can attain things otherwise impossible, even though this requires a sacrifice on the part of others. For example, it seems to me that Neil Armstrong's or anyone's being able to stand on the moon could make the expense worthwhile even though the rest of us do not get to go but have to pay for it. And it seems better to me that some people might live in mansions, if everyone else could live in at least a good home, though not perhaps as good of homes as they could live in if no one got to live in a mansion because the materials and labor used to build houses were equally distributed. Also, it would not be right to prevent people from scrimping to send their children to violin lessons or to college to have a better life, just so that such parents could have a slightly better environment they could share equally with their children such as more steak, slightly longer vacations, a newer car, etc. I believe that a very lopsided distribution of wealth, with great riches for some contributing to great poverty and hardship for others, is always at least prima facie unfair and to be avoided; but I do not see how unequal distribution of wealth, above that assuring every deserving person of a decent standard of living (considering the kinds and quantity of wealth, technology,

materials, inventions, etc. available at the time) is necessarily unfair or bad.

Even minor questions of fairness of distribution can be complex. One day when I picked up my three year old from a nursery school she attended one half-day a week, she was embroiled in a serious "discussion" (tugging match) with another three year old about the proper distribution of toys in the room. He was asserting his right to some toy because he had it first; she was asserting hers on the basis that he had taken two toys and could not play with them both. My wife thought the boy was right; a friend of mine thought my daughter was right and argued "what if he had taken all the toys in the room first? Would that mean no one else could play with a toy?"; I was uncertain about who was right (since he hadn't taken all the toys) but wished the kids could have talked about it less physically and more rationally since I could see both sides and wish they each could as well. (Wishes don't have to be what one reasonably could expect to come true.) At any rate, even in questions like this, utilitarianism alone could not have decided what was the correct distribution, if a compromise could not have been reached. Utilitarianism does not always address itself to questions of distribution of good; and where it does, it does not always seem to give the best answer.

10) It seems to me it is wrong, and not just unreasonable, to unnecessarily risk harm in a reckless, negligent, heedless, or irresponsible manner even when no harm actually occurs because of it. For example, I think it is wrong to drive drunk on a freeway or to fire a gun into a crowd, even if you don't hit anyone. People may disagree about what counts as an unnecessary risk, and thus disagree about whether something such as skydiving or even traveling on a vacation, is wrong or not, but I think the principle itself is correct. The principle does not mean that all risks are wrong, such as investing in (or starting) a business, or such as buying an affordable lottery ticket as a means of entertainment and fantasy,

but those which are unreasonably risky, however that might properly be determined.

11) It is wrong to try to inflict needless harm on someone who does not deserve it, even if you fail, and even if you end up causing something good to happen to them. E.g., suppose you try to assassinate someone and fail, but your attempt diverts the intended victim's itinerary and saves him or her from another planned attempt later that would likely have been successful. Your attempt to assassinate him would still be wrong, even though it actually, by chance, saved his or her life. On utilitarian grounds, your act would have to be called *right*. That points out a flaw in utilitarianism. The best your wrong act could be called would be *fortuitous*, not *right*. You should still be prosecuted for attempted murder.

With the reservations of these kinds of cases though (and I am not saying these are mutually exclusive – they may overlap – nor that they are exhaustive – there may be some other kinds of cases I have not recognized or thought of yet that apply here) it seems to me that utilitarianism in terms of good (that is, causing most good, least harm, or greatest balance of good over evil), not in terms of happiness, is the principle of ethics to begin ethical considerations with. I will argue against some particular ethical principles later that do not take into consideration the amount of good produced in order to determine what acts are right, but briefly here it would seem that a theory of what is right for people to do must in part, at least, involve their doing things that bring about good (prevent evil, etc.) for themselves and others – and the more good and/or for the more people, the better. Any theory which could totally disregard or ignore how much good or how much harm is done or is caused by a given act, seems on the face of it at least to be one that could hardly describe what our obligations are. Certainly, as I have argued in some of my cases against utilitarianism, the total amount of good consequences for the greatest number of people may be overridden by other considerations; but that does not show it never needs consideration or that it should always be overridden. Until someone can develop a theory which encompasses utilitarianism with these

counter-cases, it seems to me we should accept it as a place to begin deliberations, keeping in mind these kinds of counter-cases as limitations.

And, to complicate matters, these kinds of counter-cases are not always overriding anyway. These kinds of cases are only warnings not to blindly accept utilitarianism; but they are not sufficient by themselves to reject it, even in situations somewhat similar to the ones discussed. For example, the harm in keeping a particular promise might be so egregious that utilitarianism would justifiably demand such a promise be broken. You have to measure in some way the obligation to keep your promises against the obligation not to do unnecessary harm, and you then have to see which is the overriding obligation. I have no general principle or way as yet to tell automatically how to decide such conflicts – that is conflicts between utilitarianism and the kinds of exceptions mentioned, or even between the kinds of exceptions themselves. For example, does keeping a promise to a stranger override doing a favor a family member requests; should one be loyal to a friend who has done something wrong; if so, what form should that loyalty take?; etc? You need to look at the particular conflicts, deciding what further merits each side might have, keeping in mind that you need to treat reasonably and relevantly similar cases similarly, but making sure cases which seem relevantly similar really are.

My current view about those cases which still leave self-doubt, or which leave disagreement between reasonable, conscientious, understanding people after all available evidence has been considered and carefully scrutinized and attended to, is that it is probably all right to accept either alternative. I believe that in cases that are "too close to call" probably either choice is morally acceptable or right.

And further, even in such cases where one option eventually and unexpectedly appears to produce more good than another, or where an option eventually and unexpectedly produces sufficient good to override a right that was otherwise more important (or

produces less good than a right that was otherwise less important), choosing what turns out to be the wrong option will not make one morally culpable. Making a choice based on all the information available at the time does not guarantee that further information, not available at the time of the decision, would not have made one wish he or she had chosen differently. But decisions which turn out to be wrong, though reasonable at the time they were made, do not mean one was bad in making them or that it was morally culpable to make the decision the way one did.

I can encapsulate the general approach in a principle, but that principle is really just intended as a condensed or abbreviated way of saying what I have said so far:

Ethical Principle

An act is right if and only if, of any act open to the agent to do, its consequences bring about the greatest good (or the least evil, or the greatest balance of good over evil) for the greatest number of deserving people, most reasonably and fairly distributed, as long as no rights or incurred obligations are violated, as long as the act does not try to inflict needless harm on

undeserving people, as long as the act does not needlessly risk harm in a reckless, negligent, heedless, or irresponsible manner, and as long as the act and its consequences are fair or reasonable to expect of the agent.* Rights have to be justified or explained or demonstrated; not just anything called a right is actually a right. Further, the amount of goodness created or evil prevented may, in some cases, be significant enough to legitimately override a right or incurred obligation that a lesser amount of good created or evil prevented may not. Overriding a right or incurred obligation is not the same as violating it.

*What is fair and reasonable to expect of an agent:

It is fair or reasonable for people to do things at little risk or cost to themselves that bring great benefit, prevent great harm, or create a much greater balance of benefit over harm, to others. Apart from cases where an agent has some special higher obligation

that he has assumed or incurred, as the risk or cost to the agent increases and/or the benefit to others decreases, an agent is less obligated to perform the act. At some point along these scales, the obligation ceases altogether, though the act may be commendable or "saintly" to voluntarily perform (that is, it may be "over and above the call of duty"). At other points, the act may be so unfair to the agent – may be so self-sacrificing for the agent to perform, even if voluntary, and/or of so little benefit to deserving others, that it would be wrong. (Not every act of sacrifice or martyrdom is all right or acceptable.)

A supermarket checkout line provides ample illustration of many of these principles – a veritable microcosm of ethics in practice. Suppose you have a cart full of groceries and you just happen to beat to the checkout line a person who is carrying only one item, a loaf of bread; and he has ample cash already in his hand. You got there first, so you have some right to go in front of him; but the more polite, and, I think, the right thing to do, other things being equal, would be to let the other person go first for two reasons: (1) utilitarianism – if it takes him 30 seconds to check out and takes you 8 minutes, then if he has to wait for you, it makes two people wait an average of 8 minutes and 15 seconds; but if he goes first it cuts the average down between you to 4 minutes and 15 seconds. If he has to wait for you, more "person-minutes" (as in man-hours) are wasted than if you have to wait for him. (2) You are giving up a little to help him a lot; you are giving up 30 seconds to save him 8 minutes.

But suppose another person appears who is also carrying one item, and the cash to pay for it immediately. And another. The utilitarian position still may make letting them in front of you, thus saving all of you the most collective time, but fairness to you begins to count for something. At some point the burden on you makes it only reasonable that you should take your turn (which after, all you, you have earned anyway) while the others wait. (To help them see this is right, and so they don't think you are just being selfish or petty or taking selfish advantage of some mere good luck, you might explain you have already let in one or more just like them, and, in

fairness to yourself, it is time for you to just go ahead and take your turn.)

Or suppose the person you beat to the register is not carrying cash but is fiddling around searching for his/her checkbook. Now it will take him, not 30 seconds to check out, but maybe two minutes. Plus, there is the aggravation on your part of watching someone write a check for a $1.25 purchase, the kind of thing that almost makes you want to reach in your pocket and just give him/her the money. To give up your turn to him would be less utilitarian, though still collectively utilitarian time-wise, but it would be decidedly more of a burden to you and not save the other person proportionally as much time. I think you have the right to take your turn; though it would be very kind and generous to give up your turn.

Or suppose you just beat someone to the line who has 3/4 the number of items you have. Your getting their first, coupled with the fact that you would have to give up 6 minutes to save him only 8 minutes, allows you to keep the spot, overriding the utilitarian calculation, though you could be generous if you wanted to.

Suppose you just beat in line someone with two full carts. It would perhaps be generous of you to give them your place; but barring some particular reason for it (they are old and frail – and you hate to see them spend 5% of their probably remaining life in the checkout line, or it is a hugely pregnant woman whose labor looks imminent or some other such cradle to grave circumstance) it seems it might be more foolish than generous.

Or suppose, you have been rushing through the store like crazy because you have some sort of time limit (appointment, parking meter, picking up kids at school, darkening sky with jagged lightning and loud thunder growing ever closer, etc.), and having to wait even 30 seconds for the person with the bread and the cash in hand seems like much too long, then utility begins to switch to your side, plus it is your turn, and the cost or risk to you is greater than just "wasting" 30 seconds.

Or oppositely, you just beat someone with a full cart to the line, but the person behind them is a good friend you have not seen in a long time, and it would be fun to visit with them. (Or perhaps "Cosmo" or Reader's Digest is waiting to tell you, in an article you can read in 5 minutes, how to make your sex life really wonderful, and you don't want to buy the magazine.) You let the person behind you go first, because now the time you have to spend while waiting for them is not being wasted, but gives you much benefit. Hence, you both benefit by letting them go first; whereas you both lose if you go first.

Or suppose, you do not notice that the person behind you has only one item, and cash in hand; and, instead of politely asking your permission to go ahead of you, they obnoxiously demand to go in front of you because it is going to take you too long. You can stand your ground since they have forfeited their right to any utilitarian consideration. They are not a very innocent or deserving person.

Or suppose there is a long line behind you and someone politely asks if they can go in front of you because they only have one item and cash in hand. Utility may be on their side, but you have an obligation to the people behind you, not to rob their time or penalize them. Their time is not yours to give. (In driving, one periodically sees this kind of case done incorrectly all the time – where some nice but inept driver stops a whole line of cars behind him while he "generously" waits for two cars to pull out from a parking lot onto the road in front of him. This is particularly wrong when they are waiting to turn left, and they cannot pull out anyway because the lane they need to get to is not clear. The driver who stopped to let them out is being generous with his time, but he is also being generous with everyone's time who is behind him, and he does not have the right to give away their time.)

Or suppose you are behind another person, you both have full carts, and there are many people in front of both of you. You hear the manager call for more "help up front" and you surmise they are about to open another cash register shortly, so you tell the person in front of you, and tell them to go to the only closed register (since

there is no line there) and wait for both of you, while you promise to save their place for them in case that register does not open.

If that register does not open, you ought to let them back in front of you, even if they have twice as many groceries as you. (I am assuming there is no one behind you, so that this does not become complicated.)

Or, finally, suppose the last case, but you are the one who moves to the other line and they promise to let you back in front of them if your register never opens. While you are waiting, five people with full carts get in line behind the other person. That situation may override their promise to you about letting you back in.

There are ample chances to do ethical reflections and acts, even in the most mundane situations. One does not need to think of ethics only in cases of life and death, government, high finance, or sex. But let me discuss next a more complex and more difficult case, with far more important consequences. The same kinds of ethical principles and consideration will still apply, though some other factual (including psychological) matters will have to be taken into account.

For example, consider the case of the train, a case of utilitarianism on the one side, opposed to a case of family duty and obligation to self on the other hand. There is more than that, however, that one can say about it. First of all, let me explain about a bad answer a number of people give. They say they could only do one or the other alternative because of the way they would feel after the accident. They can think only of the revulsion to their hearts or conscience of whichever alternative seems worse to them and then say they should opt for the other alternative. But this seems to me like choosing starvation over eating snails or rattlesnake because such food seems so repulsive or like letting someone suffocate because giving mouth- to-mouth resuscitation seems repulsive. It might be best in such a situation to mend one's "gut" reactions. Surely we can take such reactions or feelings into account, but this also means knowing they might be incorrect or that they might be able to be

changed or ameliorated, in time or with some kind of therapy. Either choice would be traumatic indeed, but one often goes on after such a trauma, and particularly if one believes he has done the right thing. There is some solace in acting rightly, even if the choice is a painful one. So the question is what is the right thing and not just the least repulsive thing.

Second, some people say they would not make the decision but would leave it up to fate through a coin flip or through leaving the switch whichever way it was at the time they found it. But that would be an unsuccessful attempt to avoid a responsibility one cannot avoid. Since you know which way the switch is set and since you have the ability to easily change it, the responsibility for changing it or leaving it is yours whether you accept it or simply try to shirk it. Unless there is some compelling reason not to intervene, any situation which you have the knowledge and the power to alter or influence makes you at least in part responsible for its outcome, whether you exercise your power or not.

In the train case, I think there are a number of preliminary ideas to consider before making a final decision. First, there is the difference between the value of an adult spouse's life and the value of the life of a baby. This is for reasons that I will give shortly; but the recognition of the difference can be seen in choosing between saving the life of a mother or of her unborn child when both cannot be saved but one can. Generally one makes a clear value choice; and even though two people might disagree about whether a mother or baby's life is more important, I am here arguing only that there is for most people a clear choice, though different people might disagree with each other about which life has the higher value or which life ought to be saved, and though they might disagree about the reasons. Hence, it may turn out that the answer in the train case will be different whether you are considering the life of the 100 people versus that of the baby or considering the life of the 100 people versus an adult spouse. In fact, I believe it will, or should. So although I stated the two cases at the same time (spouse's or baby's

being on the track), you need to keep in mind they are different cases and may require different results.

Second, I think one needs to consider the value of the life of the person on the track and the probable (or average) value of the lives of the people on the train. I say probable or average value, since if you knew that the train carried only correctly convicted murderers on their way to prison or execution, that would make your decision easy. Or if you knew that the train was full of especially gifted people who had the probable potential for bringing great good into the world, that might also influence your decision. And similarly with regard to your spouse or baby – though with the baby, of course, it can only be an educated guess as to what its life might be like. With regard to your spouse, you have some definite idea of what his or her life is like – how much potential for good or ill he or she has; how deserving in general a person he or she might be, etc. And just as knowing that the train carried only bad people should influence your decision, knowing what your spouse's life is like should also influence your decision. This will not be the only factor but it should certainly be one factor.

Before going into further detail about this, let me say something about children's lives and adults' lives. In Brothers Karamozov, Dostoevsky poignantly makes a plea against the physical and mental abuse, torture, and grief of children, even more than of adults, because children are such innocent victims; and because they have not even eaten much of the apple of life yet and have not tasted the sweetness of its fruit. Adults at least have had some pleasures in life; and also are not necessarily so innocent. One might understand and in some sense tolerate the unfortunate suffering of an adult, but not that of a child. He is speaking of God's allowing cruelty on earth to children; and he says it is all so unfair, even more unfair than cruelty and sorrow to adults. There is a sense here in which an innocent child's life might be said to have more right not to suffer or to be snuffed out than an adult's – because children are more innocent

and because children have not yet had the opportunity for joyful experiences that adults have already had.

But now let me say something on behalf of the adult. First I am speaking about a morally worthy or morally good adult – not a cold-blooded murderer or some other heinous person, about whom the choice might be very easy to make if they should be on the track, even if you are married to them, love them, or are simply attracted to them. I am not necessarily talking about some perfectly innocent or guiltless or errorless person, but an innocent enough, normal enough adult human being. It seems to me that often, though such an adult has eaten the apple and has experienced some of life's goodness, such a person has also put in a tremendous amount of work and suffering to get where he or she is. Further, one may have done most of the work, without yet reaping much of the reward for that work, or without yet fulfilling one's potential for returning to the world what one has received from it – that is, without yet making the worthy contribution(s) one could. Or conversely one may have fulfilled most of one's potential for worthwhile achievement or one may be in the position where one has given back most of the good or made most of the worthy contributions one could and/or where one has received most of the kinds of goods and/or amount of good one ever is likely to enjoy. Now there is a difference in the value of the two lives – the one who has suffered much and worked hard and whose potential for giving and receiving good are great in comparison to such work, and in comparison to what one has yet given and received, seems to me to have more desert to continue to live than the one who has already reaped or presented most of the benefits he or she will, in comparison to the work and/or suffering he or she has experienced.

It is, of course, tragic when a child dies, partly because of its unfilled promise and unfilled dreams. But is it not even more tragic when a person dies on the verge of fulfilling a promise or fulfilling a dream! Is there not a special tear for the Abraham Lincoln or Franklin

Roosevelt who does not see the dream finished or the efforts rewarded? Is there not a special sadness for the Martin Luther King, Jr. or the Kennedy who has yet so much to give and to accomplish and who is finally in or near the position to do it? but who is then not allowed to. Is it not more tragic or more sorrowful to see a person die just before or just after graduating from high school or college – so much work put in perhaps; perhaps so little received or accomplished in return? Is it not more sorrowful to see a person die after retiring from a job he did not particularly like and who so looked forward to retirement?

Is it not less tragic somehow to see the death of an older person, who though full of goodness, has filled his dreams and fulfilled his promise. The Winston Churchills, the Bertrand Russells of the world. Their deaths of course are sad; and our loss at their death is great. But their deaths do not seem filled with the kind of sorrow and tragedy the others seem to bring. They are the ones who have truly tasted the apple of life and savored it as fully as anyone can; and they are the ones who have planted and nurtured some apple trees for others to enjoy.

I think life is often hard; and often it is hardest for children; often it is only beyond childhood and into adulthood (at whatever age that may be) that we get to reap the benefits of the hard times we suffer as children, and it is then that we get to do the good or achieve the contribution which it may have been so hard for us to learn how to do.

Hence, it seems to me that we can weigh some more things in making our decision in the train case – things that may make it easier to come to the correct decision. We can guess what hardships our baby (and I specifically made this case involve a baby and not a child or some age and some experience already) will have in growing up. We can know what hardships and what delights our spouse has had and what potential for further hardships and delights they have, both for getting and for bestowing on others. We can guess what the average may be for the people on the train.

Now, of course, we do have a duty to our family; and were there

just one or a few people on the train, and were our family deserving people, then that obligation would override, I think, any duty we might have to a stranger or even a few strangers. But I have placed many strangers on the train, to try to balance or possibly override, our normal familial obligation and the value of the lives of some family members. I think in the case of the adult what tips the balance is whether or not the potential for good (both in receiving and in giving) in that person's life lies more in their future or in their past and whether or not there is much in their future, particularly if their past has been filled with much suffering and hard work in proportion to the amount of joy they have had so far. If they have received more than they will ever give or have had to suffer, and if they have received much, particularly in comparison to what they will receive or "repay" in the future, then perhaps it is time to give other people a chance. But if they have not,then because they are your loved one, and because you are at the switch, you have an overriding obligation, I think, or at least the irreproachable right to be able to save them. No one could fault you for making the choice to save such a loved one; even if they or their loved one were on the train. Certainly you would not fault such a person, even if you or your loved ones were on the train.

The case of the baby is different. I myself feel that though the baby will miss all its potential, of course, if you run over it, that is made up for by the fact that it will also have worked and suffered comparatively little in its young life. I have met others who think such lack of work and suffering is of little matter considering you are destroying all its potential for life and its joy and goodness. Some people do not feel life is all that hard, even for a child, and that children deserve the chance to live and have a chance for the good in life, even if that is at some cost to adults who have already had their chance. I myself think you should save the train rather than the baby; because though you kill the child's potential for doing and experiencing good, you simultaneously erase his potential for experiencing grief and sorrow. But I realize I see early childhood and

early adulthood in a way different from many who feel you should not limit, if at all possible, a baby's chance for whatever opportunity for good or ill that life holds. I see it as so often a time when you pay your dues, and once those are paid, or in proportion to how much they are paid, tragedy is measured in how much you are made unable to give back and get out what you have worked for, and in some sense, deserve. I think the people on the train deserve that chance, then, more than does a baby, any baby, even your baby. But I think your spouse deserves that chance from you (unless he or she has passed his or her potential or has fulfilled it already, or has never earned it in the first place) more than do all the people on the train.

I am willing to be persuaded, with good reasons, otherwise. In fact, in a sense either action you take, whether to save the baby, spouse, or the train would be right. No sensitive, rational person would judge you harshly no matter what you chose. The decision is so difficult and the options so closely balanced that no option is clearly and convincingly the correct one. Further, this seems to be one of those kinds of cases where no one else can tell another person what he ought to do – that autonomy or liberty in making this decision, because it is so close to call, keeps anyone else's decision or judgment from being generalizable. What I have done here is to give the considerations I take into account in order to come up with the action I believe right at this time in my life and until I were to hear or figure out reasons to the contrary. The point of this exercise though was to bring to bear upon the case as many relevant ideas on either side as was possible to think of to help balance the weight of the ethical principles of utility versus family duty, duty to self, etc. These principles do not operate alone, but in connection with all the facts and values that apply in the circumstances. Ethics does not operate in a vacuum but requires other knowledge and some perspective about life as well.

But before anyone wants to make too much of this case in terms of infanticide or abortion or whatever, let me say that this is a totally fabricated case, made up intentionally to have few options, and none that are attractive. Real life often has, or could have,

more and more attractive options than are available in this case. In considering abortion or abortion policies, for example, there are many, many things to consider – the humaneness of (current) adoption laws and policies, the responsibility one had for becoming pregnant, the risks of carrying to term, the possibility or feasibility of embryo transplant that might terminate the woman's pregnancy without terminating the embryo's life, etc. For example, it seems to me that, in considering adoption laws and policies, it would be more humane and better all-around for biological parents to be permitted to contact with their maturing child if they wish, but only have the legal rights that a neighbor or aunt and uncle would have in raising that child. That way they could have as much knowledge and interaction with the child as any non-parental, interested party could have, but they would not have the right to interfere with the adopting parents' rearing of the child. Such a policy might cut down voluntarily on the number of abortions, since giving up a baby for adoption under those conditions might be a more attractive alternative to abortion than it is today.

Also, say, in opposing the abortion by a mother-to-be who became pregnant in spite of reasonable and responsible birth control and who cannot afford to rear her child reasonably, it seems to me those who would prevent her abortion have some responsibility to overcome her reason for wanting it by helping to see to the child's at least minimally reasonable financial needs and well-being once it is born.

The train case does not lend itself to much generalization about matters such as abortion because the possibilities in the train case are limited and artificial. The two cases are similar, however, as they are to other ethical problems, in that they involve knowledge and considerations outside of just ethical principles by themselves. When the time comes that embryo transfers are a feasible medical possibility, that will open up new solutions (and different problems). Access or availability of financial, psychological, and other kinds of help with rearing children probably could materially reduce the

number of abortions sought or turned to as the only source of remedy. But there are far more things to consider in different kinds of cases of abortion then I want to get into here. I simply did not want my discussion of the train case by itself to be extrapolated into supporting some sort of justification of abortion or of its prevention.

Ethics does require consistency in similar or relevantly similar cases – that is cases where there is not some good reason to accept different principles of behavior. In the train case, you would be irrationally and unfairly inconsistent if you held you should run the train carrying Jones off the cliff in order to save your wife, but that Jones should run over his wife in order to save a train with you on it – and you can point to no morally relevant difference between you and Jones or between his wife and yours. You would not be being rational but would be rationalizing. Whereas if you hold that you and Jones should each save your own wives, even if you are on the train that he runs off the cliff, then you are taking a stand with regard to a principle and are not just acting on a selfish whim or rationalization. One of the ways of telling whether you are being rational or just rationalizing is to ask whether you would want others to follow the same principles you would if your situation and theirs were reversed. This does not test whether your principle is right or not, just whether it is a principle you hold out of logic and believed merit, or solely out of its personal circumstantial appeal and benefit to you.

In the train case, a number of my students in the past, when first confronted with the question, see a great difference between what they think they would do and they think they should do. This happens quite often to us when we are confronted with, or when we think about being confronted with, certain situations that seem to require an ethical decision, particularly ones that are difficult or that require sacrifice. Often what we do, or what we want to do or what we think we would do, is different from what we think we should do. I think it is important in such cases to try to make your "shoulds" (as a friend of mine calls your feelings of obligation) coincide, or line up, with your desires, or with what you think you would do. Don't just dismiss the situation by simply ignoring either

your moral feelings or your desires. Often we do the right thing without knowing the justification for it, and we then feel guilty because we vaguely think some other act would have been more justifiable, when in fact it would not have. This is not to say we are all, or that anyone is, always moral without thinking about it or without knowing it. It is only to say that sometimes we can be wrong about what we think is the moral thing to do, particularly when we have not actually explicitly weighed the facts and values that show the justification. And oppositely, sometimes you will find, when you find there is no way to justify your desires, that those desires will actually diminish. Trying to settle the conflicts between your vague feelings of obligation and your feelings of desire will often help you find out there is not really a conflict after all, and that what you really want and what you really ought to do are one and the same.

To say that a principle is generalizable is not to say that it applies to all people in all situations, but only to relevantly similar people in relevantly similar situations. (This is not only sensible ethics, but is true in other areas, such as medicine as well; which medicine, and how much, a doctor ought to prescribe depends on the ailment, age, size, allergies, etc. of his or her patient. A doctor does not "treat" all patients the same, but only those with the same illness and physical conditions, etc.) In ethics relevant factors can usually be reasonably discovered and discussed. I think also that numbers alone, can sometimes be a relevant factor. If thirty students is the maximum number for a certain teacher's being able to teach a certain course well, then allowing a 31st student to add the course would be wrong. This would also contradict the claim someone might incorrectly make who held that if you let Smith into a course late (as the 30th student), then you have to let in whoever else wants to add the course late as well. When I was a college academic counselor, I one day had an argument with the chairman of the English department about the rightness of allowing a woman (who worked and who had children to care for, etc.) to take a particular course at a particular hour in which it was offered that was a course

she needed to go on in the field, and whose particular class in question was the only one being taught that term that she could feasibly work into her schedule. The class section was closed to additions; it had its quota of 25 students. I pleaded for this one particular addition on the grounds of utility for this particular person. The chairman admitted that one or so more students would not hurt the teacher's or class's performance, but still wanted to deny the admission on the grounds that if he let this particular student add the course to her schedule, he would have to let everyone who wanted it add it to theirs too. I said that was not true, that we would then only have to add everyone, up to the maximum (for teaching purposes) number who had such relevantly worthy circumstances as hers. She got the course.

In one of my classes there was some disagreement, if a student wanted to enroll in my course well after the term had started (and thus would have to be tutored by me to catch up), whether it was right or fair for me to accept a student I took an immediate liking to, and turn down those I did not. I thought it was right, since there was no obligation to accept anyone in such circumstances and that if I were going to have to put in extra work in order to do so to help the student catch up, I should be able at least simply to pick those for whom I thought my burden would be less.

It is simply not true that everyone should be allowed or denied what someone might be permitted or denied. Only those with relevant similarities under relevantly similar conditions need to be treated similarly – the point is to determine which similarities and conditions are relevant and which are not. Sometimes it may be numbers alone; sometimes, not. Another kind of case involving numbers alone might be that of not walking on the grass of a scenic area. The point is not to ruin the grass by wearing it down. If thirty people per day won't wear it down, then those thirty should get to walk on it – or if it can be walked on till it ceases to be resilient, then those who can walk on it while it is still resilient should be allowed to. This is why Immanuel Kant's deontological (that is, formal or procedural) maxim of doing only what you could

will that everyone could do is an inappropriate one, I think. It is usually voiced in the rhetorical question "what if everyone did that?" You only need to generalize or universalize insofar as people are in the same relevant circumstances. If everyone made love to the same woman or man, that might be bad, but that does not make it wrong for their spouse or someone they desire to. Or for the first thirty people to take the above course or walk on the grass. The fact something would be wrong for everyone collectively to do does not make it wrong for some individuals or small numbers to do. The fact that no more than 20 people should ride in an elevator at one time does not mean one person, or the first 20 to get into it, should not. Figuring out the relevant circumstances is part of doing moral reasoning, and figuring them out is another thing that will help you see whether you are actually doing moral reasoning or just making rationalizations.

Fairness: it seems wrong to me that one should always do things for the greatest number if that means always having to deny one's own needs or desires. For example, one day I seemed to keep driving by stranded motorists near their broken down cars. The first one I changed a tire for; the second one I took to get gas; the third one I had to just ignore since I was beginning to run late for my own duties. There were plenty of other passing drivers who could help; I had already done my share for that day. Hence, consideration of fairness – fair distribution of benefits and burdens – might at times override considerations of utility in a particular situation. Even had there been more than one person in that third car, as long as it was not an emergency situation I think I was under no obligation to stop again to help them.

Suppose your spouse wants to go to a movie this evening, but you really don't want to go – tired, bad day, not in the mood, don't want to spend the money, etc. These considerations alone may be sufficient to veto your accompanying your spouse to the movie; but not if the situation is always this way – you always win on the basis of utility alone, and therefore never go to the movie. It seems to

me that fairness would dictate that you should go to the movies sometimes even though you have other reasons not to go, reasons which in an isolated case would be sufficient grounds not to go. I think the moral of this kind of story for relationships is that it is better to give in to your mate or friend at times when you can, so that at times when it would really bother you to do things your mate or friend's way, utility alone can win the day for you, rather than having it instead be overridden by considerations of fair distribution (that is, in this case, having to do what you do not want to do so the other person can do what he or she wants to do because it is their "turn"). The fairness part of the condensed version of the "Ethical Principle" given earlier should be understood in this overall sense, not as applying just to individual cases of risk or cost to the agent.

Now concerning deciding just utility alone for a particular situation, it is imperative that you are able to explain just how important a particular action or desire may be to you – and to understand how important a particular action or desire may be to someone else – since the value of the stifling of a desire or the value of the fulfillment of a desire counts as part of the consequences one must consider in calculating utility. (It is only part because, for example, a child may not want to eat vegetables, but his desires are overridden by considerations of the consequences for his health. We don't always know or want what would be best for us.) Describing the importance of your desires is sometimes difficult since we do not have a standard measurement or vocabulary of measurement of the strength of feelings. However, one can give some fairly clear indication about how one feels about something in helping to discuss and to mutually decide a case on the basis of utility that involves who has the stronger desires or dislikes about a certain course of action. You might say something like "Remember how we both felt after moving into this apartment last year? Well that is how I feel after what I went through at the office today. I couldn't go to that movie for anything." Or you might describe what your day was like, verbally recreating the circumstances that made you feel like you do, so that the other person can get a pretty good

idea of how you must feel, given what you went through. If you each do this kind of thing, this should help you both better understand how important your individual desires are at this particular time; and this should help you mutually decide which choice will be the most utilitarian (that is, give the greatest benefit). It might also give the other person some clue how to change your mood and attitude or desire – "You must be exhausted (frustrated, angry, tense, whatever) after a day like that; why don't you take a nap (soak in the tub, listen to some serene Mozart, go hit some tennis balls against the practice wall) for an hour or so while I fix your favorite dinner. If you feel up to it then, maybe we could catch the late show. If not, I understand. Some other time."

In cases where equal desires oppose each other, where desires cannot be easily changed, where utilitarian consequences other than desires are also equal, and where considerations of fairness (concerning past "giving in") are also indecisive, then some sort of compromise or impartial decision needs to come into play. If there are two tasks to be done which neither wants to do, each should do one and a coin could be flipped to see who does which. If the question is a movie or single event or some such, a coin might be flipped, with the winner getting his or her way that time and giving the other person her or his way the next time, alternating each time. Or you can flip a coin each time.

The point is, in deciding disagreements over choices, two people should consider the utilitarian consequences for themselves and each other, should determine if fairness or any other "prior" right overrides such consequences, and if there is still no right answer to be shown by logic, then some impartial and fair method needs to be employed such as flipping a coin or drawing straws or whatever. As long as each side is generally concerned about the other's feelings and well-being, as long as each side is aware of that, as long as each side is able to state the kinds of considerations that logically justify its position, and as long as each side is able to understand and appreciate those statements when made by the other, most disputes

or disagreements should be able to be worked out in an amiable and civilized manner.

Two Kinds of Utilitarianism

Philosophers distinguish two kinds of utilitarianism: (1) ***act utilitarianism*** and (2) ***rule utilitarianism***. Act utilitarianism is what I have been discussing, is what is perhaps closest to the ordinary idea of doing ethics, and is, to my way of thinking, the more correct form of utilitarianism, when there is any real difference between the two forms. Act utilitarianism looks only at particular acts and says that a particular act is right if and only if it is the act open to the agent which creates the most good consequences, least bad ones, or greatest balance of good ones over bad ones for the greatest number. Rule utilitarianism is more like the law to some extent, and is an outgrowth of some of the problems that confront act utilitarianism such as the one previously mentioned where act utility might dictate breaking a promise in order that more people might have more fun, even though our intuitions make us certain that breaking a promise for that reason would be wrong. Hence, rule utilitarianism says that an act is right if and only if it conforms to a rule, and the rule is right if and only if always obeying it, rather than always obeying some alternative rule, leads to the greatest amount of good (least bad or good over evil) for the greatest number. Hence, rule utilitarians say that breaking the above kind of promise for the reasons given is wrong because it is for the most good overall for people to obey a rule "always keep a promise," whether or not there may be particular occasions that would cause more good to break a promise. The law is like this in that supposedly one should always obey the law even if on particular occasions it might cause more good not to – for example, coasting through a stop sign when it is perfectly clear there is no pedestrian or cross- traffic at the intersection. Rule utility says to decide cases on the basis of rules and to decide the rules on the basis of their utility. Act utility says to decide all cases on the basis of their particular utility, treating relevantly similar cases, of course, in the same ways.

But since there is no reason to think rules need to be overly simple or devoid of built-in exceptions or special cases, it seems to me there is no reason to need to have rules which you know will give the wrong answers in some cases just for the sake of having rules. For example, there is no reason to have a rule that everyone should keep off the grass if it would do just as well to have a rule that everyone should stay off the grass when it is not being resilient – when it is just lying down instead of springing back. I believe it is wrong to have a rule which is so broad or so narrow that you know it will lead to incorrect acts in particular circumstances. If a rule is to be the best rule, then it seems to me it should be the rule that also incorporates all the necessary exceptions in it. This then, it seems to me, would then give all the same answers as would act-utilitarianism since it would be the rule that would maximize utility (greatest good...for the greatest number) in each and all (kinds of) cases. Any less exact form of a rule utilitarianism seems to be wrong in that it is inferior to act utilitarianism and will in some cases mandate that we do the wrong act on grounds of utility alone. But, of course, any rule utilitarianism which gives the same results as act utilitarianism is open to the same criticism I listed earlier of act utilitarianism (that is, the cases labeled 1-11 earlier). Hence, it would be wrong to have rules like "never lie" or "never break promises" because there are cases where it is better to lie or to break a promise; and the rule should therefore spell out the exceptions like "never break a promise except when keeping it would cause some grievous harm not realized when making the promise, or when...," etc.

Consider the case in the poem Casey at the Bat. Suppose after the third strike Casey were to ask the umpire for four strikes, instead of three, on the basis that if he were called out it would really upset the fans. Now suppose the umpire argues that baseball is a rule utilitarian game; that is, particular cases come under particular rules (in this instance "the batter is out after three strikes") and the rules are decided on utility. Some philosophers say this is in fact the case. I do not think so. For certainly there could be a rule which

says “a player is out after three strikes unless he is very popular and needs a fourth chance.” This would be wrong, of course, but not because of utilitarian grounds, either act or rule utilitarianism. Rather it would be wrong because it would be unfair to other players and because it would undermine any significance to the game, since there would be no grounds for comparing different teams or players since they would be playing under different conditions. Giving Casey four strikes would not be right, but not because of utilitarianism, act or rule.

Further, morality is not a game and not like the law. If a moral rule precludes an act that is right or requires an act that is wrong, then it is an incorrect moral rule, even if in general it gives the correct results. “In general” is simply not good enough. Some laws may have to be kept unfairly simple to be practically enforceable; or it may be necessary for consistency, stability, or management reasons to enforce the system, even with some bad laws in it, rather than to pick and choose between the good and bad laws. But morality requires right always to be done, and not sometimes to be ignored because of practicality of enforcement, social usefulness, ease of deciding culpability in wrong-doing, etc.

Professions and organizations often are guilty of having rules that are over-simple, rules of conduct or of professional “ethics”. Although such rules often have a point or some reason, still they often require the wrong acts and cause the wrong results in many cases. A number of television shows and movies often make use of situations where conflict arises because the actually right act is the “unprofessional” one. Television teacher Lucas Tanner one time helped save a depressed girl student from suicide by talking with her late into the night when her parents were away from home. However, because he took her home at 2 a.m. (she was a high school student of his) and was seen by the parents doing this, and because he would not tell why he had been with her so late, since the girl had spoken to him confidentially about something she did not want her parents to know which would have got her in trouble of a

different sort, he was brought up on charges of unprofessional or wrong behavior. Danny Thomas, as the doctor on his show "The Practice" was accused of unprofessional conduct when he purposely caused a depressed female patient to fall in love with him because he felt she would otherwise not have the necessary will to survive surgery she needed. He had unsuccessfully tried a more verbal and rational direct appeal to elevate her spirits earlier. In these cases the unprofessional conduct was the right conduct because the "professional" codes contained bad, overly broad, rules. None of this is to argue that teachers should date their students or that doctors should seek for their vulnerable patients to fall in love with them in general. It is easy to see numerous situations that would turn out badly if these were standard practices. It is only to say (1) actual ethics should take precedence over professional codes, which are often oversimplified ethical standards, or not really ethical standards at all, (2) in cases where ethical standards and professional codes conflict, ethics should prevail, and (3) professional codes should incorporate allowances for such special circumstances and should incorporate mechanisms or processes by which those allowances can be sought or recognized and achieved. When intentionally violating a professional rule, one should understand the general rationale for the rule and be able to demonstrate why that rationale does not pertain in the case at issue and why the professional rule, if followed, would lead to the wrong or undesirable results. And professions should be flexible enough to appreciate and accommodate reasonable and conscientious disagreements and conflicts with their general policies.

Professional Distance

Some people seem to think that professional distance means you do not have to show normal decency, kindness, friendly behavior, etc. to others. I hold this to be wrong. There is sometimes a point to professional distance in order to be fair and objective in dealing with students, employees, colleagues, patients, clients, etc.; but distance does not mean discourtesy, incivility, or inhumanity. And I am not always certain professional distance is not just a poor excuse to

keep from getting involved when one actually should get involved with another. If one would not treat his friends like he treats his patients or customers, maybe one should begin to treat his patients and customers more like he would treat his friends insofar as time and energy permit and insofar as there is no special practical reason not to.

The Golden Rule

The Golden Rule is probably not meant the way it is usually understood and applied. As it is usually understood and applied, it is often a wrong and harmful "formal" rule. As it is usually understood, it implies first that what you like or think you should have is what others also like or think they should have. Second it implies that a person should be treated the way he or she wants to be treated. Neither is always the case. Certainly how a person would like to be treated needs to be taken into consideration, but it is not the only consideration. A murderer might like to have royal treatment, but he may not deserve it. A madman may like to have nuclear weapons, but he should not be able to have them. A three year old may not want to take a nap, eat vegetables, take a bath, or go to bed at a reasonable hour, but those wishes ought not always to be honored. People may want drugs but that may not be good for them. People may want to watch mindless sports or mindless movies all the time, but that too may not be good for them. There are all kinds of things that people may want that they ought not to have. There are things to take into consideration in many cases besides what people want.

Further, the Golden Rule – "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" or "Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you" – assumes that what you want or don't want is what others want or don't want as well. But certainly other people do not always want the same things we want. Parents often force their children to do things they wish others had forced on them as children – but though that might have been the right thing for them as children, it may not be right for their children and it may not be what their children want or would want. A person with some

musical talent may wish his parents had made him continue piano lessons when he was younger; but that is not good enough reason to force his child, who may have no musical talent or interests, to continue piano lessons. Teachers and academic or vocational counselors sometimes incorrectly force or talk their students into taking fields of their own interests rather than fields more in line with the students' interests. At least utilitarianism takes into account, in consideration of how to treat others, what others want (and whether that is good for them and for everyone), not just what you (would) want. And the cases mentioned in opposition to utilitarianism also take into account what is fair for others (and everyone else affected) as well as what is best. One could imagine a rapist giving the Golden Rule as a defense of his actions: "Well I would have wanted her to rape me." (Or "I would not have wanted her to pass by without raping me.") (I do not consider there to be any difference between the positive and negative form of the rule because almost any act can be described using either form; it may just sound a little stilted or odd stated in one form rather than the other.)

It seems to me that the Golden Rule, however, was more likely intended to mean something like "Consider other people's feelings the way you would consider your own," or "Do not forget that other people have feelings and concerns just the way you do, so do not ignore their feelings and concerns when deciding how to act." This is good insofar as it goes, but it does not tell us all the considerations we need to take into account in deciding what act is right in a given situation. As I have just pointed out, people's feelings or desires often need to be outweighed by other factors. A rule that is meant to be "the" (only or main) principle of ethics would need to be much more complete than the Golden Rule is.

And like the Golden Rule, the fiats to "love thy neighbor as thyself" and to "love, and do as you will," are neither specific nor helpful, and may be wrong or harmful in many cases where good intentions lead to bad results. "The road to hell is paved with good intentions," is

not without some justification. Love, in terms of feelings or concern alone, does not insure right conduct toward the loved one or toward anyone. Rather than love's being a guide to ethics, I have been arguing that ethics – right behavior – is a part of love (as well as an important part of other relationships). If you do not treat people right, they, regardless of what they feel for you (even if it is some kind of attraction), cannot have love for you. And if others do not treat you right, whatever you feel for them (even if it is some kind of attraction) cannot be love. But loving someone does not imply you will treat them right. And I think it does not necessarily even imply that you will try to, let alone that you will succeed. However, you do have responsibilities and obligations to try to do what is best for your family members and for friends, people with whom you have grown interdependent, who depend on you and help you out at times with some sacrifice to themselves, children who are in your care. This is an ethical obligation or responsibility, not one dependent on love or something as uncertain, unpredictable, and possibly ephemeral as feelings. Such responsibilities and obligations might be overridden by higher obligations, but they ought not be dismissed for no good reason or just because one is simply no longer "in love" (for example, "magically attracted") or no longer feels like fulfilling them.

Responsibility and neglect of obligation

In one of my classes someone made the point that (in the book of Job God was not responsible for Job's misfortune – the devil was. God only let the devil do it. However, on both models or concepts of responsibility described earlier in the section on free will, God was still responsible in that He could have prevented the catastrophe had He chosen to (and He could have chosen to). Likewise the doctor who could perform either a successful abortion or a successful delivery. He is responsible for whatever he chooses, since he could have done either, and he could choose either. In this sense he is playing God either way, not just when he acts "actively" to perform the abortion. He is responsible either way. And it is no good answer in ethics to say in such cases we should do the "natural

thing" or just let nature take its course; since if we did natural things we would still be living in the jungles, still be eating with our fingers, still be doing without diapers and toilet training for our children, and without toilets for ourselves. We would not be using vaccines to prevent disease or antibiotics to cure it. Since probably most of what we do and think right is not natural, it is hard to argue in certain difficult or controversial cases that the natural thing is therefore the right or obligatory thing simply because it is natural.

The modern way to try to shirk responsibility is through deference to rules, company policy, regulations, the law, or through supposed delegation of responsibility to a committee or to another person, group, or department. Actually one can only pretend to avoid responsibility these ways because the point remains that if you have the capability to change the outcome or to control or even to influence the committee or the other people, you have the responsibility to try, or to have a good reason not to have to try. You cannot simply say, it is not in your hands, because that is not true. Saying something is not your responsibility does not make it true. And having something not be part of your job description does not alone prevent it from being your moral responsibility.

Goodness of Persons vs. Rightness of Acts

This is an important distinction. People can try to do right without succeeding, and they may be responsible in various ways for omitting to do something that ought to be done, without in either cases thereby being evil or morally bad. I am not sure I know all the things that make a person a good one (for whatever instance or amount of time is in question) but some qualities that come to mind are their being conscientious, responsible, trying to do right things, trying to figure out what things are right, being concerned about and considerate of other people's feelings, etc. I don't know whether being loving in terms of feelings would count. I doubt it. Seems more a character trait or psychological trait rather than strictly a moral trait. Anyway, good people can do, and often in fact do, wrong things when they are trying to do right; and bad people can do right

things (though this is probably rarer) even though they are trying to be selfish, vindictive, or spiteful at the time. Since it is necessary to know a person's rationale, motives, and intentions to determine whether he is good or bad or not, it is wise to exercise extreme caution in making such judgments, since these are usually harder to know than just whether his action is right or wrong. It is usually easier to judge the rightness of acts, since the act can be seen, than to judge the goodness and badness of persons. You can hold that someone is being wrong without accusing him of being a bad person; and this can often help you get your point across without his becoming too defensive to see it. In some cases there will be clear-cut malevolence intended, but in most cases in life among civilized people it will be difficult to tell whether the perpetrator of wrong acts is malevolent or incompetent or simply misguided, myopic, or incidentally ignorant, though well-intentioned. Until you can prove otherwise, it is often better to assume mistake rather than malevolent intent. It is generally better – because more tactful and more effective at least to begin pointing out a problem by saying something like "I don't think this is the right thing to do because…." than to say something like, "How could you be so selfish (mean, stupid, or whatever)…."

The Ethics of Caring

In line with the preceding paragraph, it seems to me that an "ethics of caring", which is something of a recent theory of ethics advocated by some, does not necessarily point out the right thing to do. It is a good thing to care about people, but it is also a good thing to care about doing what is right for people whether you care about them – i.e., have any personal feelings for them over and above humane feelings you would have for anyone – or not. In some cases, one's feelings for another can even override one's judgment in a harmful way. It may be that having personal feelings toward another person will make one work harder to try to figure out what is right and to try to do it, but it is not clear that is more likely to lead to knowledge about what is right than will simply caring about doing the right thing. It is probably true that caring about people whether

in a special way or even just in a humane way, along with treating them right is better than just treating them right. But it is not clear that caring will help one know the right acts to do; and if the choice were between being treated right by someone who didn't care and being treated wrong by someone who did care but was mistaken, I think I would prefer to be treated right without compassion than wrong with it. Of course, in a situation where no one can actually solve your problems or help you, then compassion will be preferable than lack of it, but compassion by itself is not a guide to determining what is right in a given situation. It may only help you be more diligent in seeking what is right, but is no guarantee you will find it.

"Virtue Ethics"

Usually attributed to Aristotle (I believe mistakenly), "virtue ethics" is the view that there are certain virtues, such as loyalty, integrity, truthfulness, etc. that let us act rightly. Aristotle did point out that ethics consisted of doing what is right and not just knowing what is right to do, and that without the proper cultivation and practice of virtuous behavior, people might not do what they know in their minds they should. But Aristotle thought that the virtues to be developed were those which one discovered through reason, and once one discovered them, then one should cultivate or practice them so that they became easier to do when necessary. The modern theory however seems to assume that there are certain virtues which are the right way to behave under all circumstances; e.g., never lie, always be loyal, etc. Aristotle would, I am pretty sure disagree with that, and think that such a principle led to extremes rather than to the golden mean, that he thought most virtues represented. For example, undercover police agents need to lie to do their work. Similarly spies. But I think it is also okay to lie when doing so will cause only good but telling the truth will do only harm. Particularly in cases where one is trying to build confidence in, say, a child, and the lie will help that but the truth will undermine it. So, for example, one might tell a child s/he looks good in some outfit that is not all that attractive on him/her, but is not so bad that

others will poke fun and prove you to have lied. That is particularly true if your child's confidence will help him/her actually seem more attractive to others than would a better outfit that the child does not feel confident wearing. Or, in teaching children to ride a bicycle, I lie to them about not letting go because otherwise they will not even let me help them learn to ride. I don't let go until I know they can balance the bike, and I have them ride on grass at the time I do let go. Invariably after they have ridden some fifteen feet on their own, they will notice I am not with them and they will fall over, and be angry that I let go. But when I point out how far they got on their own after I had let go, and tell them they **can** ride their bicycle now by themselves, they immediately get over their anger and want to ride by themselves again. So I think lying about not letting go is a good lie that is right to tell. Or consider loyalty. Clearly blind loyalty to someone like Hitler or to someone out to make money at any cost to others is not a good kind of loyalty and is not right to have. I would argue that the only thing that makes something a virtue is that it is right to do, not that any act is right because it fits into a category that is simply considered to be a virtue. While truth telling and loyalty are often right ways to behave, that does not mean they are always the right thing to do. And if a normally virtuous behavior would in some particular instance only cause significant harm and its opposite behavior would instead achieve much good, then it seems pretty clear to me that it is not the right thing to do in that particular case, and is not a "virtue" then.

Conscience

The problems with principles which rely on conscience telling you or anyone what is right are that (1) conscience can be wrong – conscience usually has more to do with good intentions and is satisfied with them than with whether acts really are right or not. Also (2), some people's consciences are more easily satisfied than others and then they ought to be. Many former Nazis had, and many still have, clear consciences about their acts. This is not to say that people who follow principles cannot be wrong; it just does not make their wrong be right. As I mentioned earlier, principles should not

say a right act is one that you think does the greatest good, keeps a promise, or whatever; principles should say a right act is one that in fact does the greatest good, keeps a promise, or whatever. Otherwise for an act to be right, a person only has to think he is doing the right thing; he would not have to actually be doing the right thing. In the case of conscience, this translates into the only requirement for an act's being right is for the person performing it to have a clear conscience, for whatever reason, about it. You could never then say anything, without being contradictory, like "I know you think that was the right thing and I know your conscience is clear about what you did, but what you did was wrong." Any principle or theory which makes that kind of statement contradictory is a flawed one.

Doing Right When It Is Not In Your Own Self Interest

Why do the right thing when it is not in your own self-interest? Why make sacrifices you can never regain? The initial answer is because it is in someone else's interest; because it brings about the greatest good for the greatest number of deserving people, because it keeps a promise; because it ... – any of the reasons that justify the act in the first place. Some then ask, but why do it anyway? Why be moral? This is a moral question that seems to require a non-moral answer, since the moral answer will have then already been given. I do not know that a good nonmoral answer to this question can or needs to be given. If a morally blind or insensitive person wants to know what the point is in being moral, how can you show him? Is it not like a blind person's asking to be explained the difference between blue and red? It cannot be explained to him; not because there is no explanation, but because he cannot "see" it or understand it. The difference between blue and red is a difference in color, and you can only perceive and understand that difference if you can see different colors. If the blind person then asks for the difference besides that or beyond that, there is no satisfactory answer; and there need not be one. Perhaps to explain the point of morality or of being moral (whether it is in our own self-interest or

not) we can only answer with Batman's tautology in one comic that "Good is better than evil, Robin."

I have lately come to believe there is another answer that can also be given, which is that by doing the right thing, even when it is not in your own best interest, you make yourself a more "deserving" person – a person more deserving of having good happen to you. Now, just being deserving does not, of course, mean that good will actually happen to you, but it means it should. And just as in some metaphysical sense "good is better than evil", it is also, in some metaphysical way, better to be a deserving person than not to be one. Deserving people are better in some way than undeserving people. And it is better to be deserving even if you are not necessarily then better off – meaning even if you do not benefit in the way you deserve.

In one of my ethics classes one time, the students felt that it was right to keep money that you found instead of giving it back to the person who had lost it. One woman even remarked that she had found a purse with cash in it once and returned it all intact to the person who had lost it, and that she felt guilty about that because she thought she should have kept the money. I disagreed with them and we argued periodically about it throughout the term. They also held a view that seemed to me to be oddly inconsistent with their view about keeping found money, though they saw no inconsistency. They believed that if someone they did not know was about to accidentally leave their purse or wallet when they left a restaurant or library or any such place, that they should tell the person so that they did not lose it. They believed they were entitled to keep lost money, but they had an obligation to help people who were still within sight not lose their money. So they had an obligation to prevent money from being lost, even though it could be theirs the second it was lost, but they had no obligation to return lost money to anyone.

The last point I made that term was that if they held the view they

did about not having to return lost money, they could then neither expect nor demand that anyone should return any money they themselves might lose. I said that I thought that if they were not willing to return found money, then they did not deserve to have any money they lost returned to them. I also pointed out that I thought that it was just not as good to live in a community where people did not unselfishly help each other as it was to live in a community where people did help each other, even if that meant you were the one who often helped others but did not necessarily need or receive help in return. That was about as far as I could take this then, and now, except to point to a story that was once on either *Twilight Zone* or *Alfred Hitchcock* or a series like those.

In that story a stranger comes one evening to the door of a married couple, bringing with him a briefcase that contains a fortune in cash (at the time of the show, it was a million dollars, but with inflation would today be much more). He will leave the briefcase with them for 24 hours, returning to pick it up tomorrow, and they may keep the money or give it back to him when he comes. He will take back the briefcase either empty or still full of the money, whichever they decide; it does not matter to him. The only catch is that if they keep the money, someone they do not know, somewhere in the world will die who would not otherwise have died that day.

The couple falls to arguing about what they should do, and most of the episode is taken up with their arguments. They finally decide to keep the money, since, they figure, one more death among the thousands of people who die every day throughout the world will be of no real consequence, and since it is not as though that person would live forever otherwise anyway.

The man returns to pick up the, now empty, briefcase, and as he is about to leave they ask him why he wants it, since the value of the case is insignificant compared to the value of the money. Why bother coming back for the briefcase? He responds that he needs it back because he is going to put another million dollars in it and take it to someone who does not know them.

Two Closing Thoughts About Ethics

1) I think ethics takes precedent or should take precedent over all other things in life. Business, political, governmental, military, or whatever considerations should (and actually do) all come secondary to ethical considerations. You cannot suspend acting ethically for any of these things or for any reason though you may try or may pretend to or may think you can. Of course, certain choices may be difficult and have compelling reasons or obligations on both sides. There can often be disagreement among good, intelligent, well-meaning people. But the point is that you must try to determine what the morally correct answer is, and not just ignore that in order to "follow orders", "obey rules", "abide by the decision of the committee", "do [your] job", or "not make waves." These kinds of reasons may be overriding or sufficient justifications in some cases, but they are not necessarily always or automatically so.

I think all our choices have a moral component or character, though not all our deliberations or decisions recognize this. We do not always take morality into account in making our choices. Not thinking at all; being blind to all but one side; peer pressure; habit; fashion; fad; social, governmental, or employer pressure; tradition; parental guidance; religious prescriptions, etc., particularly when they are not perceived as influencing our decisions, often make us choose things without considering whether they are really right or not. This is often very unfortunate.

(2) Do ethics. Do it as Socrates did; discuss, analyze, question, explain, try to guide others to see what you see and try to remain open to seeing what they do. Help others show you what they know if they are not as good at explaining their views and their insights as you might be. Help draw out of them what they really think, so that you both can analyze it and scrutinize it to see whether it holds up. This way both of you can learn what is right and what is not, and why. As with Socrates, even if you only find out what you do not know, you will be the wiser for it; for it is better to know what you do not know than to believe untruths.

But do it, as did Socrates, tactfully and nicely and in honest search for truth, not contemptuously, abusively, or arrogantly. Even then, you will not be universally loved. Socrates made enemies and was ultimately condemned to death essentially for practicing philosophical inquiry. And even in supposedly civilized places today, people do not always take kindly to being questioned or to having someone disagree with them on ethical grounds. (People seem to feel they are all expert enough in moral matters and do not like to have their expertise challenged. Or perhaps they misconstrue challenge of the rightness of their ideas as challenge of their own goodness or good intentions.) They are not likely to put you to death for it anymore, but often they can make your life miserable for it. You need to be circumspect with many people and only to discuss or disagree about important issues with them. With others it is safe to discuss all kinds of ideas about ethics. The more you can do it with different people, the more your knowledge of ethics can grow and the better morally you can become.

Added Section with General Principle Amended

In some of my ethics courses, a set of questions I posed for discussion was:

You and a group of 9 others, all innocent friends of yours, are invaded and captured by a hostile group of evil people who tell you that you must choose and kill one of the others or they will kill you. What should you do and/or say in response? and why?

What if they had said instead that you must choose and kill one of your friends or they will kill **all** of them (or all of you) and that the choice and responsibility for everyone's' lives is yours? What should you do and/or say in response? and why? Explain and justify your answer.

I believe my answer, to these questions, along with some of the points I make in "The Flaw of Legalism in Society and Education" show there is a problem with the way utilitarianism is often stated1, and with my own ethical principle, which contains some utilitarian aspects, though with many restrictions or qualifying conditions2.

My Answer

I would say this to the captors in both cases, and the justification for saying it is given in the answer itself:

A person who would give me such a choice is so evil as not to be trusted to tell the truth. If you would kill innocent people, you would lie, since lying is itself the lesser evil. So from where I stand, no matter what I do, my life and the lives of everyone here are in your hands, and you will likely kill me or all of us anyway. You only want the satisfaction of first turning me into the monster that you are, so that I will die as evil and as weak as you are.

You can say I am responsible for the choice, but that is not true, since it is an artificial responsibility imposed by you and that is within your control and responsibility. You can kill me or us if you wish, and I cannot prevent that, but I can prevent you from making me your accomplice; I can prevent you from turning me into the same evil scum that you will be if you kill any innocent person. These people are all innocent and do not deserve to be murdered. It is better to die an innocent and deserving person than to be someone who kills them and who is thus neither innocent nor deserving. Do what you wish; choose whatever kind of person you wish to be, and become that kind of person. The choice is yours to be decent and civilized or to be even more reprehensible and evil than you were in giving me this choice.

If you have killed innocent people before or forced them to be killed, I cannot undo that and neither can you, but you have a chance here to turn your life around in at least some small way and become less evil than you will otherwise be. If you have not killed or forced a killing like this before, you do not need to start now. The choice is not mine; it is yours.

The Problem for Utilitarianism

If, for the sake of argument and explanation here, that the captors, evil as they otherwise are, are people of their word, who will in fact let you and everyone else live if you kill one of your friends, it still seems quite wrong for you to kill a friend or to choose someone to be killed in order to save the others. Or if we take a slightly different

case – you are asked by the Nazi SS if you know where a Jew is hiding, and you do, should you risk being killed by the SS or should you turn in the Jew that is hiding? Even if turning in the Jew protects you and your family, it seems incorrect to say it would be morally right to turn in the Jew. It may be expedient; it may be necessary to protect yourself and your family, it may be understandable and perhaps even excusable, but it hardly seems right or the appropriate terminology to refer to it as being the morally right thing to do.3

Or take the case of standing up for an unpopular cause and risking ostracism and all the ills, social and economic, that may accompany it. Even if it is understandable that one might back away from defending the cause, that does not seem to make doing so right, and it would not make it wrong to defend the cause even if you and your family suffer for it.

In the previously mentioned essay about legalism I quote the following from President George

Washington's Farewell Address:

"Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

And I then say:

" And I suspect, but cannot prove, that what Washington had in mind here is that there needs to be some role involving belief in punishment (by God), or else some people at least will not do what is right." (The idea is that although people may escape legal punishment here on earth, they cannot escape punishment by a perfectly knowing and just God when they die; and those who do not receive rewards they deserve on earth will receive those rewards when they die.)

That essay goes on to make other points, but in light of what I have written above – i.e., that punishment of you and your loved ones for doing a right act does not make your act wrong, and that avoidance of punishment through one's actions do not make those actions right – it cannot be that the right act always brings about the most good (on earth), and it cannot be that even in my principle it does, if the harm avoided is undeserved or unfair punishment or the good achieved is undeserved or unfair favor.

In short, the problem is this: some cases of doing the greatest balance of good for the most deserving people seem to be right and others seem not to be – particularly in the case of avoiding unfair punishment. Utilitarianism cannot account for this distinction, and I don't think that even my principle as stated above accounts properly for it.

Before I go on to discuss this further and to try to resolve it, let me contrast it with a different problem that seems possibly similar in a morally relevant way. I don't know who first raised this problem, but it contrasts the following two scenarios: 1) a train is out of control and is headed to a fork where you have to either send it one way or another – if you send it one way, it will kill some innocent person that will be in its path on the track, but if you send it the other way, it will kill twenty people who are in its path on the track. What should you do (assuming no special knowledge of the supposed value of any of the lives involved, or assuming that all the lives are of equal moral value)? Utilitarianism and my principle both will say the right thing to do is to divert the train to run over the one person in order to save the twenty, not vice versa. 2) a train is traveling along a track and the engineer does not know that twenty people are stuck on that track ahead and will be killed unless the train is stopped. The only way to stop the train is by getting the engineers attention by throwing someone onto the track in front of the train, sacrificing that person. Utilitarianism demands throwing the person onto the track, but I don't think my principle allows that, so I do not believe this problem is quite the same as the one of the Nazis or the captors of you and your friends or of undeserved punishment in general, in

which I stand by the answer I gave above to the captors' case. The people on the track have either put themselves in harm's way or have been unluckily put there by others. Once that has happened, nothing can be done by anyone to save everyone (all 21 people), and you should save the most you can. However, in the second scenario, while it may be unfortunate that the twenty will die, there is not a person already in harm's way who is in the same boat they are. You would have to sacrifice someone innocent who is not in harm's way until you put him there. That would be wrong for you to do to him. At best you could in a saintly way sacrifice yourself to save the twenty, but you are not obligated to do that and you do not have the right to sacrifice the person who has done nothing to be in harm's way. Even if someone else were to want to throw that person onto the track and you had the power to stop him from doing so, I think you have the obligation to stop him because it would violate that innocent person's right to be sacrificed. The person already on the track is not "innocent" in the same way if he put himself in harm's way, or at least is already in harm's way in a manner that is not your fault and is beyond your control.

In the Nazi or truthful captors' cases, utilitarianism says to sacrifice someone to save the greater number of others, but I am afraid my principle also does that too if it were to be interpreted normally in the way it is expressed. I don't know any easy way to amend it other than to say that punishment and reward (or perhaps unfair punishment and unfair reward) should not count as a consideration in calculating the amount of harm avoided or the amount of good accomplished. That is, the harm suffered due to unfair punishment does not turn an otherwise right act into a wrong one. The only goods and harms that should count are ones that are in some sense a natural or unavoidable, intrinsic consequence of the act, not extrinsic ones which result from choices made by others in response to the act. That is why I write in *The Abortion Debate* that insofar as people want to minimize or end abortions, they should minimize or eliminate as much as possible the reasons and causes

women choose to have them, rather than making punishment for them so Draconian that the woman's best choice for herself is to cause a baby to be born if it in fact it really should not be because it will needlessly suffer in unredeemable and unjustifiably horrible ways. The point is to make having a baby be right for the sake of the baby, not make having it be right for the sake of the mother's avoiding punishment if that is not really in the best interest of the baby or is not fair to the mother (as in making women have a baby that endangers their lives or that was conceived by rape for which they are not responsible).

Now normally, of course, we think that punishment is justified if it helps make someone do what is the right act in the first place. We thus threaten punishment in order to try to deter wrongdoing. But that only deters those who are egoists seeking their own best interests, not those who know they are actually seeking to do what is right but which we mistakenly think is wrong. I am not opposed to punishment, as I explain in "Justification of Punishment" but punishment needs to be either a deterrent or a penalty for doing acts that are wrong apart from the punishment, not for making right acts be or seem to be wrong. Similarly, rewards need to be an incentive for doing what is right apart from the reward, not an additional good consequence that makes a wrong act be or seem to be right.

So it seems to me that my general ethical principle needs to be amended to the following: An act is right if and only if, of any act open to the agent to do, its intrinsic or natural consequences, apart from any extrinsic unfair rewards or punishments, bring about the greatest good (or the least evil, or the greatest balance of good over evil) for the greatest number of deserving people, most reasonably and fairly distributed, as long as no rights or incurred obligations are violated, as long as the act does not try to inflict needless harm on undeserving people, as long as the act does not needlessly risk harm in a reckless, negligent, heedless, or irresponsible manner, and as long as the act and its consequences are fair or reasonable to

expect of the agent.* Rights have to be justified or explained or demonstrated; not just anything called a right is actually a right.

Scenario 4: Let us take into consideration that the most effective non-permanent methods of birth control usually say on the labels that they are 99% effective. If this means such methods as condoms fail to contain semen 1 out of a 100 times, that if you use them with intercourse twice a week, they will fail once a year. Of course, the woman might not be fertile during those failures, except, 25% of the time, might result in an unwanted pregnancy on average once every four years with condoms; more frequently if sex is more frequent or at least more frequent during fertile times. Now suppose, that abortion is used as the backup means of birth control, and suppose that whenever abortion is used for that purpose, on average one in every 400 times that people all over the world had sex using 99% effective birth control, some innocent living adult died in his/her sleep who otherwise would not have died. ***Should sex of this sort, which is thus only for pleasure, be considered morally acceptable? Why or why not? Use the general ethical principle to support your response***. ***NOTE***The question is NOT about whether abortion is right, but whether it is right to have sex or not if you would have an abortion for any

resulting pregnancy as a means of birth control.

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Further, the amount of goodness created or evil prevented may, in some cases, be significant enough to legitimately override a right or incurred obligation that a lesser amount of good created or evil prevented may not. Overriding a right or incurred obligation is not the same as violating it.

*What is fair and reasonable to expect of an agent:

It is fair or reasonable for people to do things at little risk or cost to themselves that bring great benefit, prevent great harm, or create a much greater balance of benefit over harm, to others. Apart from cases where an agent has some special higher obligation that he has assumed or incurred, as the risk or cost to the agent increases and/or the benefit to others decreases, an agent is less obligated to perform the act. At some point along these scales, the obligation ceases altogether, though the act may be commendable or "saintly" to voluntarily perform (that is, it may be "over and above

the call of duty"). At other points, the act may be so unfair to the agent – may be so self-sacrificing for the agent to perform, even if voluntary, and/or of so little benefit to deserving others, that it would be wrong. (Not every act of sacrifice or martyrdom is all right or acceptable.)

Key Takeaways

- Right acts consider many elements: best consequences, fairest and most reasonable distribution of burdens and benefits among deserving people affected, risk and severity of potential harm, intended harm (even if failed) to innocent people, what is fair and reasonable to expect of an agent, specially incurred obligations, rights and what they are and the difference between overriding both them and specially incurred obligations versus violating either. When these elements all point to the same act or option being right, there is little problem with ethical choices. Only when in a given situation the different elements give conflicting answers does it have to be decided which ones should prevail and how to weigh the importance of one element against the other(s).

Key Terms

- ***Consequentialist (also called 'teleological') principles and theories of ethics*** are those which hold that the overall good or harm of consequences are what make acts right or wrong.
- ***Non-consequentialist (also called deontological) principles and theories of ethics*** are those which hold that things other than consequences are what make acts right or wrong.
- ***Ethical Egoism*** is the principle that everyone should act in their own best interest
- **Psychological Egoism** is the view that everyone does act in their own perceived best interest and cannot do otherwise.
- ***Ethical hedonism*** is the principle that everyone should seek their own greatest happiness, satisfaction, pleasure, contentment.
- ***Psychological hedonism*** is the view that everyone does act to maximize their own greatest happiness and cannot do otherwise.
- ***Utilitarianism*** is the principle that all acts should do what causes the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
- ***Act utilitarianism*** is the form of utilitarianism that says right acts are those which individually do the greatest good for the greatest number.
- ***Rule utilitarianism*** is the form of utilitarianism that says right acts are those which conform to the rules that do the greatest good for the greatest number even if the individual act does not do the most good

for the most people.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What are ethical egoism and ethical egoistic hedonism? And what are psychological egoism and psychological hedonism?
- ***Question***: What is Utilitarianism?
- ***Question:*** Should the *Golden Rule* apply to personal relationship and love? Why or why not? Or if so, in what way; if not, in what way? Does the Golden Rule let you know what is right to do? Why or why not?

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Chapter 27 Modification of the Analysis of Love

Chapter 27 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain the exception for when love does not require being good for the partner.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn ways to cope with your parents or in laws becoming to involved in your relationship.

The train case points out an interesting flaw, however, in my analysis of love as it is stated. My criteria is that for a relationship to be one of reciprocal love, it must be that both people are good for each other; and how good could it be for one to cause a train to run over his or her spouse? How good were the British officials being to their spouses when, if the story is true, they did not warn them to leave Coventry before the bombing? Yet we might, and I would, still want to say that the officials did love their families and would be loved by them even though they allowed harm to come to them, or allowed potential, yet avoidable, harm to befall them.

I wish to insert a necessary modification into my analysis of the ethical component or dimension of love, one which now can be understood without making the criteria seem difficult, unwieldy, or unnatural. The clause would exclude (from being unworthy of love) cases of causing or allowing harm (including even relatively minor things such as inconvenience or disappointment) to the loved or loving one if such harm is the result of overriding ethical obligations

to others, or to self, when such overriding obligations are not unnecessarily brought on in the first place by the one doing the harm. For example, the Coventry case found those officials in that position; it was not as if they had known about it ahead of time and intentionally put their families in jeopardy. Consider the classic ***antagonistic mother-in-law, daughter-in-law conflict*** where each demands mutually exclusive behavior of the son/husband. A man, of course, does have obligations to his mother even after he is married, though he also has obligations to his wife as well. In the best of situations those obligations will not be mutually exclusive too often, and both women will understand the cases when the husband feels obligated to opt for the other, understanding that he has treated them both as fairly as possible overall in such situations. Love will not be the worse for it. The worst situation is when both make mutually exclusive demands often and one or both do not understand ever being denied. In this case, probably neither will feel loving for very long even though it is not the man's fault. But consider a slightly different case. Suppose a man continually places himself in such conflict by promising his mother things he does not have to promise, and which he would have no obligation to do if he did not make such promises. And suppose he continually hurts his wife's feelings by keeping his promises to his mother and thus fulfilling his unnecessary and self-imposed obligations to his mother while thereby neglecting what would otherwise be his obligations to his wife. I think there is a point in saying that such a man is not as good to his wife as he could be and as he should be since he himself keeps unnecessarily bringing about the very conditions under which he is obligated to disappoint her or let her down. This would also be like the train case if the spouse at the switch had also been the one who first tied the other to the track.

One other potential problem with the ethical aspect of the analysis of love is that it is stated in terms of the loving one's good or welfare, not in terms of how it is right to treat them. I spent considerable time earlier showing that improving the welfare or good for the

greatest number was not always ultimately the right thing to do, that there could be overriding factors. I am concerned that solely with regard to the loved one alone, and not because of some overriding obligation to another person or group, there might be some action which is right for them, but which diminishes their welfare or benefit, and not just temporarily (as when you have your ill child have an inoculation), but overall. I cannot think of any such cases but I cannot rule out the possibility. An example that comes close is that of punishing a child to teach it necessary behavior that all other means fail to teach. This is not a perfect example because teaching such behavior may be for the child's own good in the long run anyway.

At any rate, if there are cases where diminishing another's welfare is still for some reason the right way to treat them (and not just the right way for you to act because you have some overriding obligation to fulfill), then the ethics part of the analysis needs to be understood in terms of the lover's being treated right rather than just having his or her good increased, bad decreased, or greatest amount of good over bad provided. If there are no cases where treating someone right is different from being good for them, then either "good" or "right" will do; but "right" is still the more general term.

Hence, the final version of the analysis would read: A loves B if and only if:

(1) A has strong feelings of attraction in general, or to some reasonable extent, for B,

(2) A, in general or to some reasonable extent, enjoys B (that is, A in general or to some reasonable extent is satisfied by B and by the things B does), particularly in areas of psychological importance (or meaningfulness) to A, and without particular disappointment or dissatisfaction in other such psychologically important (meaningful) areas, and

(3) the things B does are right for A, excluding cases where B diminishes A's welfare because of acts B is obligated to do because

of some overriding obligations (to self or others) which B did not unnecessarily or wrongfully bring on him or herself.

A and B would love each other if and only if, A loves B and B loves A; that is, if and only if they each had strong feelings of attraction for each other in general, enjoyed and satisfied each other in general, especially in areas of psychological importance (or meaningfulness), and in general did what was right for each other except in cases of overriding obligations to self or others that were not unnecessarily brought on by the one required to fulfill the obligation.

The briefer, originally stated version is more easily intelligible, more readily apparent, and in most cases is equally correct and useful.

Key Takeaways

- A modification on the author's analysis of the ethical component or dimension of love, is the clause that would exclude cases of causing or allowing harm to the loved or loving one if such harm is the result of overriding ethical obligations to others, or to self, when such overriding obligations are not unnecessarily brought on in the first place by the one doing the harm.
- Another potential problem with the ethical aspect of the analysis of love is that it is stated in terms of the loving one's good or welfare, not in terms of how it is right to treat them.

Key Terms

- The classic ***antagonistic mother-in-law, daughter-in-law conflict*** where each demands mutually exclusive behavior of the son/husband.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question:*** What are the author's criterion for: a relationship to be one of reciprocal love?
- ***Question***: What is a potential problem with the initial ethical component of the analysis of love?

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Chapter 28 Good “For” and Good “To”

Chapter 28 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Recognize that in some cases there can be a difference between being ‘good for’ someone and being ‘good to’ him or her.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to see the contrast between egoism and love.

I have often interchanged the expressions “being good to” someone and “being good for” someone. I think there is a difference that sometimes occurs between them, but I have not intended to refer to that difference and have meant to use them interchangeably. If you help someone develop a talent they may have or if you help them in some other way become a better person, then I think the normal expression in English is that you were good “for” them, and not just good “to” them. But I think that inspiring someone to be a better person, helping them become a better person, and/or bringing out the best in another person is also to be good to them. I do not think ***being good “to” someone*** necessarily just means serving (in the sense of waiting on) them, meeting their needs or desires, pampering them, or giving them things they want. It can also mean helping them develop their worthwhile potentials.

In fact, helping bring out the best in someone is, I think, one of the best ways to be good to someone; but it is also something that

cannot be done by just any one person for just any other person regardless of how hard they both might work at it. Not everyone can develop the talents of another, even if they want to; it takes more than desire. As I said in the ethics section concerning what things are good in life, I think one of the most important values is the development or maximization of one's capabilities to create, discover, recognize, and enjoy or appreciate goodness, beauty, and truth of whatever nature or area of interest. So any person or partner who helps another do that is being very good to (and for) them in at least that regard.

However, I think that just following the ethical principles outlined in the preceding chapter, or just acting toward others with civility and etiquette are insufficient to help them maximize their capabilities. It takes the luck of the right two people coming together, people with the right coinciding interests and abilities. It is one thing to be properly parental to a child, or to be polite, civilized, and moderately good "to" someone else. It requires more than that to bring out qualities in them that only a few people might recognize in their undeveloped state, understand themselves, and understand how to develop. For example, Mickey Mantle's father (I believe) was very instrumental in developing his son's baseball playing talents. Mr. Mantle was very good for his son. Mozart's father and the company he kept, along with the musical knowledge and love he had, and the kind of environment he surrounded his children with, was also extremely good for his son's early musical development. Had those sons been born to each others' father, however, neither one would likely have developed in the way they did, regardless of how good or loving either father would have been "to" the son. Similarly, two loving partners may be able to be good to each other – fair, civilized, considerate, satisfying, exciting, kind, helpful, beneficial in many ways, etc. – but it takes a special, and perhaps somewhat rare, blend of characteristics between two people for them to bring out the best in each other and in each others' worthy talents. This is not to say that only musicians can be best for other musicians or that bodybuilders need to marry each

other to have the best marriage. People do not need to have similar interests or abilities to be able to bring out the best in each other; and often having similar interests and abilities (such as the pair of golfers I told about earlier) will not help you bring out the best in each other. But to bring out the best in someone else, or to be good in some (other) way "for" someone else, requires having some right set of characteristics that coincide or blend in some special way with the other person's qualities. Other people's characteristics, no matter how good, might not be so particularly beneficial to some particular person; and someone who might be wonderful for one person's development might not be good at all for someone else's.

Remember also, this particular blend I am speaking about has to do with the ethical or value aspect of relationships, not necessarily the interest or satisfaction aspect. The two do not always coincide. People may have worthy talents or abilities they are not particularly interested in developing or pursuing, and they therefore are happier around people who do not help them develop their abilities; and some people have abilities they wish to cultivate, which, apart from the joy they bring, are abilities that are bad or evil.

Key Takeaways

- One can be good to a person without being good for him/her; and vice versa, but in many, perhaps most circumstances, being good for someone and being good to them coincide.

Key Terms

- ***Being good "to" someone*** does not necessarily just mean serving (in the sense of waiting on) them, meeting their needs or desires, pampering them, or giving them things they want, but it may also mean helping them develop their worthwhile potential.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What are some of the most important values to consider when trying to help bring out the best in someone?

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Chapter 29 Ethical Principles and Spontaneity

Chapter 29 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain that morality is not necessarily an impediment to spontaneity.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn more about spontaneous living.

Since many people mistakenly equate having principles with the inability to act spontaneously, I would like to share one way in which ***spontaneity*** and principles can coincide. In many cases I see ethics as, in a sense, establishing boundaries of behavior, and it is within those boundaries that one is then free to be spontaneous. It is like childproofing a room or a fenced in yard so that a child may be put into that room or yard to play freely without hurting himself. You have taken out of those places any things that may harm the child, so he may freely do as he wants within those places. It is also like when, knowing that you deserve a peaceful and joyful vacation, you set aside certain "time boundaries" in which you are allowed to have a good time without having to be constantly on guard or in reflection about your otherwise normal occupational obligations.

A couple of examples with regard to ethics:

There are limitations on how much force (and how it is applied) one is allowed in disciplining one's children. Excesses to this are unwarranted abuse. Yet within those limits one may be free to spank a child if and when the child's behavior and or attitude warrant it.

A couple may make a correct decision that sexual intercourse is justified for them. This does not mean that upon rationally making that decision they must therefore immediately become sexually active; they may not be in the mood. What the decision means is that (barring any future reason not to have intercourse) they may do so without qualms or hesitation when passion arises. Whereas if a couple correctly believes that it is wrong for them to have intercourse, but not wrong for them to kiss, pet, etc., then they are free to do spontaneously what is right for them within those boundaries.

Being ethical or having principles does not mean one must always be considering justifying those principles. Generally one works out many principles before applicable situations arise. When those situations then do arise, one acts accordingly and spontaneously within those principles and guidelines. Further, doing whatever one feels like at the time without regard to forethought and principles, and then having to accept the consequences for such impulsive behavior later, seems to me no desirable kind of spontaneity anyway if indeed it is any sort of spontaneity at all. Certainly the moth who flies to the flames is not doing so spontaneously but compulsively; likewise in many cases the person who impulsively and compulsively seeks a good time in ways that are unwarrantedly thoughtless and risky to himself or dangerous to others. The spontaneity of a drunk driver who kills himself and/or others on the highway seems a spontaneity better uncultivated. Doing what one's nature mindlessly compels is no more spontaneous than is always avoiding what one's nature desires. Spontaneity is only an enviable trait when it makes doing what is right also interesting, fun and desirable, not when it makes a mindless fool a slave to impulse. And ethical principles correctly allow spontaneity when they allow the satisfaction of the right desires, stifle the wrong ones, and when they do not require untimely deliberation that itself destroys the desires when they arise – untimely deliberation that should have been done previously.

Ethics then, instead of being an impediment to spontaneity, can

actually make spontaneity more enjoyable by making it less compulsive and by permitting spontaneity that is unlikely to lead to later disaster or regret.

Further, it is not difficult to keep in mind major ethical principles. There are not all that many if the analysis in the previous chapter is anywhere near as correct as I believe it is. The only difficult parts of doing ethics are not so much the moral reasoning part but knowing the factual parts, and having the will power to do what you determine you should on those occasions when your obligations are not in your own self-interest or are not particularly enjoyable. The difficult parts, I think, are (1) trying to get all the facts in a situation to determine what kind of situation it is and thus to know which ethical principles apply, (2) knowing what the actual consequences of different alternative actions are likely to be, (3) knowing, in order to take it into consideration, what other people want or do not want and what pleases them or displeases them, particularly when they are the kind of people who will not or cannot tell you (and who only complain or ignore and reject you afterward, even when you have tried to do what you thought they wanted, let alone when you believed there was reason to override their wishes), and (4) having the courage and/or will power to do those things you should which are not in your own best interest or the best interest of a loved one or which are simply difficult for whatever the reason.

Key Takeaways

- Ethics can make spontaneity more enjoyable by making it less compulsive and by permitting spontaneous acts less likely to lead to disaster or regret.
- Ethics can establish safe boundaries within which

spontaneity can be better enjoyed.

Key Terms

- ***Spontaneity*** is only an enviable trait when it makes doing what is right also interesting, fun and desirable, not when it makes a mindless fool a slave to impulse. And ethical principles correctly allow spontaneity when they allow the satisfaction of the right desires, stifle the wrong ones, and when they do not require untimely deliberation that itself destroys the desires when they arise – untimely deliberation that should have been done previously.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: How is ethics not an impediment to spontaneity?
- ***Question***: Does being ethical or having principles mean one must always be considering justifying those principles? Do you have to think long and hard about each and every thing you do before you do it? Wouldn't that be time-consuming and exhausting?

Chapter 30 Ethics and Sex

Chapter 30 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Identify the criteria that make sex right or wrong.

Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn about the

psychology of sex.

When ethics is mentioned, people often tend to think of very weighty or difficult kinds of problems that need to be solved. For some, sex is such an issue or such a problem. However, I think it is more accurate, and easier to look at all our ***intentional actions*** as either ethical actions or potentially ethical actions. Most of the things we do every day we do not think of in this way because we do not have to make moral deliberations about them at the time. We may know that it is okay to put our feet on a hassock but not on fine furniture, without thinking twice about it. We have already made (or someone else has and told us the results when we were children) the ethical analysis before and we know what to do now without having to think about it. We put on our left shoe before our right shoe (or vice versa) with no thoughts about the ethical propriety of that because there never was any reason to believe it mattered; and even the slightest deliberation would show it does not matter, so that putting on either shoe first would in general be (all) right.

Consider a man who gets ready to go play tennis on some given weekend. Is it an ethical decision for him to make whether to play tennis or not? I say yes, though, as above, it may not be one that requires any noticeable deliberation. In the simplest case, suppose he wants to play, his opponent wants him to play, there is a court available for them, and there is no reason for them not to play. Hence, the ethical decision may be that it is right for them to play. The decision is so easy to make that it seems hardly a ponderous enough problem to be considered an ethical one by those who think of ethics as involving only difficult or impossible questions about weighty matters. But now suppose one of the person's has a bad knee and may further injure it playing tennis, putting him out of work for a while, causing certain disruptions in his family life, etc. Or suppose one of the person's spouse wants him or her to do

something else that day, or suppose one player has some other duty to do – maybe an exam to study for, a doghouse to build before inclement weather sets in, office work to do. Or suppose they always play tennis instead of spending time with the family, instead of babysitting so their spouse can have free time, or whatever. Now the ethical part of the decision whether to play tennis becomes more obvious.

Most of what we do, particularly that which we do routinely, can be thought of as having ethical aspects, but ones which are, or have been, so easily taken into account, that they do not seem to be actions involving ethics or involving individual moral deliberation. But they could easily take on the aura of an ethical issue were someone to challenge the rightness of our doing them, giving their reasons why we should not, and compelling us to give our reasons of justification.

Sex is not unlike other issues in these ways except that the situations in which there are opportunities or desires for sex are often ones that involve taboo, anxiety, or the possibility of various (kinds of) catastrophic consequences. But this is not always the case; some situations are not problematic. A couple married a long time with no reason to fear pregnancy, **STD** (sexually transmitted disease), or social ostracism, who still want to have sex with each other, can tell when each other is in the mood, or not unwilling to get in the mood, may have sex without any (new) ethical "deliberations" at all. This is not the case with those younger, fertile, unmarried, etc. people who are not sure whether it would be the right thing to do or not. Or sex between partners of the first couple might not be an ethical issue for either person, but it might be for one of them if they are thinking about having it extramaritally instead.

At this point I would like to explain the kinds of things I think should rightfully count as good reasons in deciding whether sex is right or wrong in a given situation or not. And the situations are important, for it can make a difference whether you are married

or not, fertile or not, contagiously ill or not, or whatever. And it makes a difference at different times even in a given marriage, for example, in cases where both partners want to versus cases where one partner really does not want to at the time, let alone many cases involving questions of fertility, method (if any) of birth control, etc.

First, let me make a comment about the probability of some actions or consequences happening and the value (for example, desirability or undesirability) of their happening. Probability and value are two separate things, each of which needs to be taken into account in determining the reasonableness of an act. In deciding whether an act is right or wrong you have to determine its consequences, which is a scientific or factual problem, but you also have to determine what the probabilities are of its various consequences occurring and also what the desirability or undesirability of those consequences are, if they were to occur. Not all acts give 100% probability that they will yield particular consequences. If you hold all four aces in a straight poker game, you can safely bet the mortgage. If you hold three aces, there is a high probability you will win, but it is not a certainty, and if the mortgage is crucial to you, you perhaps had better not bet it. How much to bet in any case will depend on the probability of your hand's winning and on how important winning or losing what you bet is to you. It will not be the same in different cases. In tennis, one must take into account not only the effectiveness of a given shot if it lands in the court, but also the probability that you can land it in the court. And the situation in the match will determine the value of winning or losing a particular point.

You might be more ready to take a riskier chance if you are ahead two sets to one and 5-0 in the last set or if you are exhausted and cannot afford a prolonged rally and this is an important point to win but not an important one to lose. But the probability of hitting the shot in is as important to consider as the consequences and value of hitting it in. It does no good to hit shots you cannot make just

because if only you could make them, they would win points, games, sets, or matches for you.

Now there may be a mixture of consequences from a given action. These must all be considered in evaluating the overall worth of performing the action. Say you are thinking about trying a very difficult passing shot in tennis. The probability of completing it successfully may be low, but the exhilaration of doing it successfully may far outweigh the potential loss of the point. It may also serve to intimidate the opponent in his future attempts to come to the net even if it is just out in this instance. It may be something you just want to try regardless of the outcome of this particular (perhaps insignificant) point. The probabilities are different for each consequence. Unless you fall down or mis-hit or flatout whiff the ball, you will probably satisfy your urge to try the winner; that has a high probability. The probability of winning the point even if you make the incredible shot good is another question; the opponent may just as incredibly retrieve it. The probability of your making the shot good is another matter. The probability of winning the point even if you make an error in the shot is another (suppose you hit it out, but your opponent misreads it and nets it trying to volley it), as is the question of how intimidating the shot is whether you make it successfully or not.

To show the point of value versus probability is fairly easy in games. To bet one dollar to win a million, even at high odds, may not be irrational if the dollar does not mean much to you to lose. But to bet $10,000 to win a million, even at much better relative odds, may be foolhardy, especially if you need the $10,000. In college football, though the odds of successfully completing a two-point conversion may be much lower than the odds of completing a one-point conversion, it would be ignorant for a team who has just scored a touchdown with no time left on the clock and who is behind by two points to elect the one-point try. The points at this stage of the game are worth not only just one or two points but they are worth, if scored, a sure loss or a sure tie.

First I would like to point out the reasonable kinds of reasons or

considerations to take into account against having sex in particular cases. All but some aspects of #4 below have to do with the value of the consequences (and are more or less utilitarian in nature, though in different ways).

(1) The risk and harm ("disvalue") of venereal or sexually transmitted disease of whatever sort, or of diseases likely to be contagious from close contact. The risk or probability may be known (say from blood tests) or unknown. Or, in terms of curable diseases such as some strains of gonorrhea or syphilis, it may not matter much to you. It may matter a great deal in cases where cures are not available, especially if the disease is harmful or fatal, or if it would do great harm to you to be discovered, because of your disease, to have had sex (that caused it). (At this writing, AIDS is the incurable, terminal sexually transmitted disease that the public focuses on; but AIDS was not the first debilitating, incurable, terminal sexually transmitted or contagious disease; and it may not be the last.)

(2) Probability and risk of pregnancy, where pregnancy would be a bad or wrong circumstance. Pregnancy may be wrong or undesirable for a number of reasons. It may mean getting caught having had illicit sex. It may mean having a baby that cannot be properly cared for, or that cannot be cared for properly without the great sacrifice of innocent people who will have to care for it (grandparents, older siblings, etc.) It may lead to an abortion, which is sometimes dangerous for the pregnant woman, and which, even if the best alternative available, is never a good or happy situation.

The probability of pregnancy depends on the fertility of both people with each other at the time, and of the risk of failure of any contraceptive the two might use. Pregnancy is, of course, a concern only in heterosexual acts where the sperm can enter the vagina (generally vaginal intercourse). The known risk of pregnancy can be different for both partners. At this writing, when the female birth control pill is the most effective non- permanent form of birth control, a man might not know whether the woman is really taking

it, whether she is taking it correctly or effectively, etc. Apart from vasectomy, at this writing the woman has more effective control over pregnancy than does the male, particularly if the male does not use a condom during vaginal intercourse. Certainly the male can use birth control methods if that is feasible, but until a male method that is as effective as "the pill" is invented, the male is not able to reduce the risk as much as might be desirable to him, short of vasectomy. For men who care about their children and who the mother of their children is, this is an important consideration.

The risks in (1) and (2) can be reduced or eliminated in some cases while still having orgasm, by means such as petting to climax, when that is mutually acceptable. When the remaining kinds of objections apply, they cannot be eliminated through technique or technology.

(3) One or both partners not wanting nor being willing to have sex with the other at the time in question. Certainly not wanting to have sex with a particular person at a particular time is a reason against sex. I have also added the "not willing to", since it may be the case, say in a marriage or otherwise serious or intended permanent relationship, that although a person is not in the mood for sex, he or she is not unwilling to get or be put into the mood. Hence the not wanting to at the time may be overridden by the willingness to at least make the attempt to get into the mood or to allow one's partner at least the attempt to get you interested if the partner is already interested. That may be only fair in some cases. In the case of headaches, sex can sometimes even be a very pleasurable cure.

It should be fairly obvious that you're not wanting, nor being willing, to have sex with someone (at a particular time) is for you a good reason not to. But it seems to me (and to at least some other men, as well as to women generally) that it is also a good reason for your partner, not just ethically, but emotionally as well. If the idea of sex is that it should be mutually satisfying, and this seems to be the idea of it for many people, it seems rather uninteresting and uncompelling to have sex with someone who does not want to have it with you. Part of the (emotional) satisfaction of sex, generally, is the aspect of being desired by and, if possible, satisfying to, the

other person, not just of satisfying your own physical desires. Having sex with someone who is just "letting" you "have" them or who is only "letting" you for money, seems like it would generally be a relatively empty, and even lonely, experience.

(4) If an innocent third party would be hurt (if they found out) and the probability of their finding out or being hurt. The "if they found out" part is only important for strict utilitarians or other "consequentialists" when one is talking about cases of breaking vows to a spouse or "breaking" convention and reasonable assumption to an intended spouse. To those who believe in obligations over and above those with just utilitarian or overall good consequences, breaking vows is wrong whether other people find out about it or not. (If it is parents or friends or strangers who would be hurt, vows are not a factor, and it only matters then if they find out, and then only in proportion to how much they have a "right" not to be hurt – that is how much of a legitimate obligation you have not to hurt them. For example, people are under no obligation to accommodate secret admirers or distant people who love them, but whom they do not love, by abstaining from sex with others. One of my college friends just had to bear up under the heartbreaking burden of knowing that his sexual fantasy idol, film star Elke Sommers, had married someone else, and was presumably having lots of sex with this someone else, her husband.) Vows are meant to be honored. But the notion of innocence is added in that it seems to me that some spouses release the other from the emotional and/or sexual part of the marriage contract by breaking it, or its spirit, themselves either by committing adultery first or by wreaking such havoc in one way or another on the other that the second person then is practically driven to find comfort somewhere else.

One other time this rather strong kind of reason might be overcome is by an extreme utilitarian case of the sort found in the movie Doctor Zhivago, where both partners were kind, principled, conscientious people, where the relationship even before sex was

so good for so long, and where self-denial on both parts lasted over a period of years until finally passions and circumstances were so overwhelmingly in favor of Zhivago's and Lara's making love in spite of his loving his wife that somehow to most people watching the movie it seemed fitting Zhivago and Lara should be lovers.

Another kind of case where vows perhaps might legitimately be broken is where two mates' sexual desires (or the their frequency of their desires) in general are so different that in an otherwise good relationship, one of them has to have sex outside of the relationship or virtually unfairly stifle reasonable sexual desires because there is no other remedy that does not require the generally less interested partner to have sex at times he or she does not want.

(5) The probability of it being a somewhat unpleasant or bad experience. This is likely for anyone's first time, particularly if they have a partner who is not especially experienced, understanding, or both. Stories about people's first sexual experiences, particularly involving intercourse, tend to be about melodramatic, dismal, frightening, and at best, unsatisfying times. This can be worked out and joked about later, assuming sexual experiences improve, but it can also be something that helps destroy a budding relationship, particularly if it is not understood as something sometimes natural. Sex is not always wonderful at first, nor is it always even wonderful for experienced people who are with a new partner. New partners, and sex itself, often require learning about; and there can be mistakes or difficulty in any kind of learning.

A sexual experience can also be less than admirable if for some reason there is insufficient time for proper romance or for basking in the afterglow or if there is insufficient tenderness or an insufficiency of any ingredient that one or both partners feel is important to their making love. A lack of commitment in some cases can ruin sex between people, making it seem mechanical, empty, or emotionally unsatisfying though perhaps physically quite good. This can happen not only to the person who is not being committed to, but it can happen to the person who is unable to make the commitment. (Some people think marriage can take the fun out

of sex with each other; but it can really take the fun out of sex with someone other than your spouse. You can feel guilty about not being totally and comprehensively committed to your extra-marital partner, whether or not you also feel guilty about having cheated on your spouse.) Also, the back seat of a car, the unpredictable, cramped quarters of a train's sleeping car, a molded aluminum and plastic motel room, your parents' house, or any number of other surroundings also often do not lend themselves to the most joyful of experiences or memories. Unfortunately frequently one has no idea beforehand that any of these things will bother or ruin the experience, but if one has any doubts about the experience ahead of time at all, there is good reason to discuss it if that is possible, and to wait for more appropriate circumstances; or, at least, through discussion to minimize the problem or harm.

(6) Finally, I think one of the most important things to take into account is each others' feelings and the understanding of what sex "means" to each of you – that is, understanding the important psychological circumstance and context you each require, desire, or expect from sex for it to be emotionally satisfying or meaningful. For example, sex can be hurtful and wrong when it means just fun to one and something indicative of emotional concern and long term commitment to the other. And this is whether such a misunderstanding is accidental or intentional. Or there may be genuine feelings of concern and attraction on both parts, but one person may view the experience as signifying long term monogamous intentions and the other person may see it as signifying "only" something beautiful you do with special people, of which there can be many. There are any number of sad misunderstandings that might occur about a sexual act. Some of these may be very damaging and sufficiently so to make the act wrong. Talking together beforehand about the meaning, to each of you, of sex with each other can help alleviate the possibility of harmful misunderstanding. And I think that is important, but talking is not the only key, since many times people might deceive

themselves about what they really want or think important. (This is not only true in sex, but other areas of life as well. Many students major in subjects they think they like, but do not really like; many people think they enjoy classical music, but hardly ever go to concerts, watch them on television, listen to them on radio, or buy classical records; many people think they wish they could spend more time with their families but whenever they have the opportunity, they find some way to avoid it; people say they wish their life was less hectic and quieter, but keep scheduling trivial activities in an effort to keep from getting bored or restless while alone in peace; etc.) There are times when people will believe and honestly say they can handle a sexual relationship without any particular commitment, but their actions will show they cannot. They will perhaps be particularly fawning over the relationship, seek excessive companionship, attention, or signs of gratitude or being held in esteem, be hurt by seemingly small misunderstandings or trivial problems, and in general seem far more attached to the partner than they ought to be, think they are, or profess to be. Likewise the opposite case, where one or the other thinks they want a long- lasting, unbreakable, monogamous attachment but can be seen to be unable to settle down yet or be monogamous. Also, people, of course, can change and they may not be able to see the change coming. They may be correct about how they feel at the time of the discussion and not realize they will not continue to feel that way. It seems to me the responsibility of both new partners to seek honest discussion with each other before engaging in sex, but it also seems to me that each should also look beyond words to try to make certain the other is not deceiving themself or likely to change their mind.

There is at least one particular kind of case where sex that occurs too early in a relationship can be extremely disappointing and discouraging. For someone seeking a long-term relationship, breaking up is always traumatic, but being broken up with by someone you really have given yourself to – your time, your energy,

your passion, your thoughts; someone you have really been your unpretentious self with, sexually and otherwise – is more traumatic than being rejected by someone who hardly knows you. It is, or seems like, a more personal rejection; your loved one does not like the "real" you. Sexual passion is a powerful force, but it can disappear in a relationship as easily as it appears. If one suspects a relationship is mostly sexual attraction, but one wants one that is more than that or that will outlast such an attraction's demise or weakening (if that should occur), one might be advised to try to see whether other aspects of the relationship can be developed before the sexual attraction fades or before the relationship sours (if it does) for whatever reason. Of course, if even temporary sex is more important to you than, or is as important to you as, a long-term relationship, this caveat does not apply. I am not saying early sex kills a relationship; I don't think it usually does that. I am saying if you would be devastated by a relationship's ending sometime after you have had sex with your partner, you want to be sure to wait until it is more reasonable to believe there is a fuller, more substantial, and more likely enduring relationship than most relationships are likely to be at the beginning, regardless of how strong the sexual passions or attractions.

I used to think, and had read and heard in lectures on sex, that sex could only be truly gratifying in a long term commitment type of relationship where each partner truly cared about the others' well-being as well as caring about each other sexually. However, I think there is enough evidence to indicate there are many circumstances in which many people can have fully satisfying, gratifying, memorable, and meaningful sexual experiences without a long term commitment type of relationship.

One kind of case is the case where one or both lovers are about to die or they are about to be separated, perhaps permanently, by some other cause outside of their control. Wars in particular often facilitate this kind of behavior, but any kind of long term separation – one person's moving, going away to college, going on a long trip, or whatever – might. Less romantically, a sailor

may have particularly fond memories of a particular prostitute he picked up (or was picked up by) in a port he had no intention of returning to. In Silent Night, Lonely Night the protagonists seem to make love for one night only, and each returns to their normal life, enriched and grateful for different reasons but for reasons they each understand about themselves and each other. There are many true accounts of the same kind of thing. A one night stand can have good (or devastating) emotional importance far beyond just the "fun" or physical pleasure it might provide. Temporary relationships can sometimes provide more than temporary reassurance, comfort, and confidence. There can be reassurance in being able to incite some passion and/or in being able to feel passion incited in you by someone. Further, if there is more than just physical pleasure, but some meaningful conversation and closeness in the relationship, however temporary that relationship is, it provides a kind of reassurance that at least some of one's ideas and perspectives on life are not totally worthless or uninteresting to anyone else. Intimately sharing one's innermost concerns with another – or even respectfully sharing (with compassion, understanding, and mutual concern) feelings, values, and beliefs of a less intimate nature that others seem to reject or scorn – can be very important and very comforting.

In sex clubs like Plato's Retreat in New York, in massage parlors, in certain swinging types of lounges, etc. it is obvious what each partner (or group) is there for, and that is not a long term relationship or a commitment of undying love before sex that night. Such sex would hardly be gratifying to everyone, and it seems to me it would not even be gratifying to many if that were the only kind of sexual relationships they had. But it certainly seems for some at least to be, at least at times, very gratifying and exciting. Sometimes perhaps it can be very reassuring too.

There are many reasons for making love and there are many effects that may result from making love; one important thing for it to be right is for each to understand the others' and their own

motivation and the likely resulting feelings as much as possible. Then, whether each is seeking a long term commitment or short, a meaningful emotional experience, or just some temporary physical pleasure, there is less likely to be the pain and sorrow caused by misunderstanding.

Reasonable grounds then counting toward having sex in particular cases are the following:

(1)(Concerning cases of vaginal intercourse), where pregnancy is desired by both and warranted or reasonable, or at least not unacceptable to either or unwarranted or unreasonable. Or if pregnancy is unacceptable, unwarranted, or unreasonable, it is preventable or impossible.

(2)Both people want to have sex with each other at the time or at least are willing to.

(3)Each understands and accepts what it means to herself or himself and to the other person and the relationship; each understands and accepts the reason they want to have sex with that person; and each understands and accepts what the psychological consequence for each is, given various possible and likely kinds of consequences. And the meaning, the reasons, and the psychological consequences are in fact reasonably worthwhile and worth the risks there might be. This particularly applies early in the sexual part of the relationship; as the relationship continues, such as in marriage, general understanding will usually be long known and need no consideration, unless there is some drastic or specific change in the relationship.

(4)There is a high probability it will be a satisfying, good, and pleasurable experience rather than a dismal or anesthetic one.

(5)No innocent third person is being undeservedly or unfairly treated or hurt. Besides someone's forfeiting the obligation of their spouse's sexual faithfulness by abuse that drives the spouse to seek the comfort of another, there could be cases, I think, where the sexual desires of two mates are so different that one of them either needs to have sex outside of the relationship (even if it is self-

masturbation) or to continually ignore or stifle his or her desires, or make unhappy sexual demands upon the less interested partner. In some of these cases, sex outside the marriage may be fair and warranted even if knowledge of it would be hurtful to the mate. If one mate continually spurns another's sexual interests and also does not want them to satisfy those interests through masturbation or sex with someone else, there is a problem in the relationship (just as there would be if the same held true in some other area of importance). And if the relationship is overall worth maintaining, this problem needs some sort of fair resolution. In some cases, such a fair resolution may be discrete, secret sex outside the relationship (if it does not actually harm the relationship) if there is no other remedy (such as the willingness of the partner with the less interest in being sexually touched to at least be willing to sexually massage the one who does want sexual touching, and for that to be satisfying and acceptable to both). (6)The risks and consequences for health are reasonably acceptable.

None of these grounds alone is sufficient justification under normal circumstances for having sex, I think. Just wanting to have sex or a likely good sexual experience, just wanting to conceive a child, or just knowing what it means to each of you are not each sufficient reasons under normal circumstances for having it. Grounds 1 through 6 must all be true, barring some unusual circumstance (I will give an example of an unusual circumstance shortly).

Further, I do not pretend that either my set of reasons for sex or my set of reasons against it are complete. There may be further circumstances or grounds I have not thought of or remembered to mention. But these at least definitely need to be considered. Other principles or criteria might perhaps override these, but the point is that solid reasons and sound arguments can be discovered and must be considered for sex to be seen to be either justifiable or not. Arguments will include and take into account passions and emotions but they should not be based solely on passions and emotions. And to help facilitate that, those arguments should be

concluded before passions arise that are so strong they block out the other reasonable and necessary considerations.

Now I have not included reasons like "two people should love each other" or "the two people are married to each other" or "at least intend to marry", etc. Marriage does not mandate sex morally, though it may permit it legally even in circumstances where it is not morally right, such as when one partner forces or in any way coerces the other against that second person's will. Second there simply seem to be too many cases where, even though it may not generally be true, sex outside of marriage meets our moral approval, where we know of the reasons and the consequences – where there was no harm done, a great deal of good resulting, and no vow undeservedly broken by the act.

I said I would give an example of an unusual case where some of the usually necessary principles do not apply. Moreover, I take this case from the Bible (Genesis, chapter 19), not only on its merit as an unusual case, but in order also to overcome any unargued objections by clergymen or others that God forbids, and/or punishes sex that is not licensed by marriage, or that breaks a whole host of the usual rules and principles (including mine) thought to pertain to sex. After Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, Lot lived with his two daughters in a cave. They realized they would not meet any men while living in a cave and that they could not have children if they did not meet any men. Unless …. On two successive nights one of them got Lot drunk and then had sex with him, each getting pregnant. God, instead of being wrathful – and this is God who just destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and everyone in them, including these two girls' husbands or betrothed, for iniquity – is reported to have made these offspring the fathers of nations, in effect blessing or condoning the acts.

With regard to love being necessary for sex; to the extent love is a combination of attraction, satisfaction, and ethically correct actions, it is partially taken into account here, since my criteria requires sexual attraction and ethical behavior for sex to be right. Whether there should also always be other or more general

attractions and satisfactions, a more committed relationship, or even more long lasting sexual attraction itself is something that would need to be argued, in the light of the many cases where those things do not seem necessary to satisfy most (reasonable) people's moral intuitions and where the consequences, given my ethical conditions were met, worked out well for the people involved. Whether they are generally required, beneficial, or important for sex to be a good experience is another matter, one that sociologists and psychologists would need to answer.

On my analysis of love, (brief) sexual attraction alone and/or the mutual enjoyment of ethical sex is not sufficient for the relationship to be called love; but unless someone can show why (full- fledged, active, and enduring) love is necessary for sex to be right, empirical evidence and intuition seem to indicate it is not (always) necessary. Of course, any given person may (and many do) want to enjoy sex generally or only in the context of a fuller (loving) relationship; but such a context does not seem to be necessary for everyone, nor under all circumstances even for those who generally prefer it. It seems to me to be more of a personal value or desire and it is relevantly taken into account in determining whether sex is right or not under the circumstances by the (ethical) consideration of what each partner expects or wants from the relationship, what the meaning of sex is to each, what they expect from sex, and what psychological context or circumstances they require for it to be emotionally satisfying or meaningful to them.

Again, though I may not have covered all the good reasons for or against having sex at a particular time, my point is that whether to have sex or not can, and should, be decided rationally. It can still be spontaneous (as I explained in the previous chapter), and it can still be emotional, and passionate. Passion counts as a reason for sex, just as lack of passion or desire counts against it; but passion is just one of the aspects (and one of the reasons to consider) that make sex right or wrong. It is not the only aspect or reason to take into consideration. The other considerations can be taken into account

at less passionate and less immediate times. Being moral involves moral reasoning, but moral reasoning can often be done ahead of time and the results "stored" for when situations arise that call for them. One should always be moral but one does not always have to be doing moral logic from scratch. One might need only to quickly and easily evaluate situations to see which previous deliberations apply. If previous moral deliberations at dispassionate times have shown sex in a particular relationship to be reasonable the next time passion arises, no real mental effort will be necessary when passion does then arise.

My discussion of sex applies not only to sexual intercourse, but to any form of physical affection. To a sexually inexperienced person in particular, but actually to any person, even hand-holding, kissing, petting, or whatever may be a serious moral and psychological issue. These things in themselves, of course, do not risk pregnancy (as long as they do not lead irrationally to uncontrolled intercourse), but even by themselves they may have serious psychological import and consequences for one or both partners. A kiss may not mean much to one person, but it might be a very intimate and meaningful act to another, who would be devastated to have it go poorly, treated lightly, or not receive the intended or desired response.

Since some of the conditions to take into account require biological and psychological knowledge (including self-knowledge) a less knowledgeable person is less likely to have correct information to consider. Fortunately one can learn without having to become a libertine. (Many libertines do not have the knowledge they should anyway.) Some experience is necessary, though unfortunately experience is often a harsh or at least embarrassing teacher. One gets some idea what sex might mean to oneself and others by kissing, hand-holding, petting, etc. – that is, by more limited and less potentially disastrous forms of sexual activity than intercourse, though even these forms of showing affection can sometimes be psychologically troubling and lead to difficult or embarrassing situations in a relationship. They can also be problematic by leading an inexperienced person to do something he or she ought not to

and will regret. Introspection or reflection on past experience helps one figure out what kinds of things lead to other things. This is not only true in sexual areas but other activities as well. One person may be able to take a five-minute study break, but another may not be able to keep from extending that five minutes into a much longer harmful period of time. Some people have to learn not to take study breaks in situations likely to prolong them. Some people have to learn not to kiss passionately in situations conducive to more intimate activity (going "further") if they do not want the more intimate activity to happen. Unfortunately, sometimes that kind of knowledge comes only with some pain or difficulty.

One can also learn a great deal about relationships by watching movies or reading books, not (just those) about technique, but about the psychological and emotional aspects of relationships – books and movies that show what different people expect from each other (in different situations), that show how different people behave and treat each other, and that show different outcomes of various kinds of likely situations. One can get some ideas about what is possible, what is desirable, and what is likely. The movie The Summer of '42, for example, seemed to offer special contrasts say between the boy who was just out for sex and the boy who wanted sex only with the person he was greatly attracted to and cared about. It also seemed to allow for discussion of how the woman treated him, in what seemed to me to be a very psychologically hurtful way for him, given the way he felt about her, his state of inexperience, and the kind of person he was. All in all, it seemed to be a particularly good movie for showing to a teenager in order to generate discussion with him or her about some of the emotional and psychological aspects of relationships and sex.

Sexual behavior involves emotions and passions but these passions and emotions can be considered, discussed, learned about, and dealt with in a variety of rational ways, and they (and sex) need to be. And contrary to making sex less passionate or enjoyable, these kinds of considerations can make it far more enjoyable. Who

less can enjoy sex and a relationship after sex than someone who is terrified of it or who is naive about it. For most people, sexual intimacy is a very powerful emotional and psychological experience, with behavior, expectations and emotions afterward that are every bit as powerful. Even people who become sexually intimate easily and quickly often have important needs and expectations afterward, which their early and easy intimacy may disguise and/or thwart. One girl I spoke with once had just spent a night with a fellow she had met during the evening in a singles bar and she said she would be really upset if the guy did not call her to take her out. You need to know about that kind of reaction in yourself and in your partner if you are going to be reasonable to yourself and fair to your partner. If she did not know how she would feel afterward and/or if she did not give any indication to her partner that she wanted this rather early sex to be just a part of something bigger, she may have acted prematurely for her own good or she may not have given any hint to her partner that this was expected to be anything other than a one night stand.

People have all kinds of different ideas about what they want and about what others want and expect. I cannot over-emphasize the problems possible if one does not know either what one's self wants or what the other party wants, whether because of either person's lack of experience or self-knowledge, because of lack of communication or perception, or because of misunderstanding. If A expects or desires something for the moment and B does also, and they both know this, their momentary relationship (whether sexual or not) might be both meaningful and good; but it will probably be neither if A expects or desires a kiss or a date or whatever to mean one thing and B expects or desires it to mean something else and neither realizes what the other means. Sometimes I think it simply not improper to ask someone why they asked you out or why they kissed you, or whatever. And it is not always improper to tell before you are asked. If the other person gets upset or angry, perhaps you did not ask them properly or tell them properly, or perhaps they

are not quite so intelligent, rational, understanding, or nice as they might be, as you thought they were, or as you would want them to be. That too is important to know before, rather than after.

Certainly a rational discussion (with the object of one's desires) about sex may cool one's or one's partner's ardor at the time, but this is not likely to be a permanent condition. (And such discussion may actually incite your partner's passions and desires even higher, since you are showing you care enough and are honest and sensitive enough to want to discuss your feelings and your partner's with him or her.) If people discuss the sexual part of their relationship before they have it, and if they take into account all the factors they need to in some rational way, then once they realize sex is right for them, they can wait for the passionate moment and enjoy it without any sorts of reservations they may have otherwise had. Spontaneity outside of an ethical framework and understanding may be frightening at the time and may have disastrous consequences. Spontaneity inside a previously worked out ethical framework is not impossible and may even be far more enjoyable – especially afterward.

And in general, although this book may seem a cold, clinical view of human relationships and of sex, so might the analysis of a great work of art or of a protein molecule also seem cold or clinical; but this does not mean that the work of art will not be beautiful when you view it again or that you still cannot consider a protein molecule with wonder and awe. In fact, the contrary is often true – that the art or the molecule will take on new beauty and wonder once you've seen how complex and intricate it really is, and once you have seen just what makes it work or be so beautiful. Analysis and discussion might take some of the mystery out of personal relationships and sex; but it is not clear to me that the mystery is what causes the magic – the beauty, the wonder, or the value – in them. In fact, I rather think it is the mystery which causes the misery – the misunderstanding, the grief, the sorrow, the confusion, and the unhappiness – that so often occurs in relationships. And although a sex ethic developed solely in a monastery may not be

very practical, neither I suspect, will be one that is developed solely in the bedroom. Passion and emotional closeness need to be experienced to be properly understood; but understanding needs to be exercised to guide passion and keep it in perspective.

Key Takeaways

- Like any other act, sex is right or wrong, depending on the same elements given in the general ethical principle presented in Chapter 26.
- Sex, particularly intercourse between fertile partners, just has different potential specific consequences from many other acts, but the kinds of considerations are the same.

Key Terms

- It may be easier to view ***intentional actions*** *as* either ethical actions or potentially ethical actions.
- **STD** is the accepted abbreviation for sexually transmitted diseases.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What needs to be taken into account in regard to the consequences portion of determining the reasonableness of an act?
- ***Question***: Is the ethics of sex substantially different from the ethics of anything else? Why or why not?

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Chapter 31 Sex and Intimacy

Chapter 31 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Explain the concept of intimacy, particularly emotional intimacy.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to explore how casual sex can affect you.

I believe, and I would like to make a case for those who do not believe it, that intimacy does not always involve sex or sexual intercourse; that sexual intercourse does not always involve (emotional) intimacy. And further, contrary to some views, even intimacy that is (primarily) sexual can be achieved without intercourse.

Now there **is** one use and dictionary meaning of *intimate* denoting sexual intercourse specifically, as when someone asks whether a dating couple has "been intimate" yet, but that is different from the sense of intimacy involving emotional closeness, psychological openness, and the comfortable voluntary sharing of one's most personal and private or secret thoughts, feelings, actions, etc. with another. And it is this latter kind of intimacy, let me call it emotional

intimacy, that I am particularly concerned with because I believe it is this kind of intimacy that people generally mean when they discuss seeking intimacy in a relationship, though I also want to discuss what I think is a related point involving intimacy that is primarily or strictly sexual.

The reason I discuss this is two-fold. First, I have heard a number of comments that imply that somehow if people do not have intercourse they have not shared real intimacy, even if they have had mutually orgasmic sex via, say, petting to climax. Phil Donahue, one morning, as just one example, discussing with prostitutes how they try to protect against getting AIDS, was informed that hand manipulation of the client was frequently used instead of vaginal intercourse. His response was something like "So in some cases then there is no real intimacy?" However, that sounded like it was generally really intimate to me, at least sexually intimate. It may not have been emotionally intimate; but having sex with a prostitute, even when it involves intercourse, may not be particularly emotionally intimate either. And if, as some reports indicate, many men often pay prostitutes primarily to listen to them talk, the conversation may have more to do with whether emotional intimacy is achieved than the kind of sex, if there is any sex at all. I would think someone needs to spell out just what they mean when they talk about "real" intimacy with a prostitute.

Second, though I am not certain whether this involves intimacy or something else, I have heard a number of both men and women say that the only possibly satisfying or meaningful or real sex is that which involves intercourse, and often by that, some even further mean intercourse that is "unobstructed" by something like a condom. And these people seem to mean or imply that this is not (just) because they think a condom makes intercourse physically unsatisfying or orgasm impossible for them, but because there is something more emotionally or metaphysically basic involved. If a condom were perfectly undetectable in feeling, these people seem to imply or say that it would still be unacceptable, even though they are not trying to risk or cause pregnancy. Further, even if

these people can have orgasm or physically satisfying sex without intercourse, they still seem to think that is not "real" sex or is not as emotionally satisfying or important.

(It may be that some people feel that sexual intimacy involves intercourse without birth control, and that it involves the willingness to risk and accept or welcome pregnancy with each other, but (1) the above view about intercourse is held by some women who take birth control pills, some men with vasectomies, and people of both sexes who are infertile for some other reason and who are therefore not risking pregnancy, and (2) most people who are sexually active, in a society where infinitely large families are not necessary and where reasonable forms of birth control are readily available, realize that risking pregnancy each time one has sex can have very unhappy or even disastrous consequences. These people are not trying to risk pregnancy. And, in fact, fear of pregnancy or disease can be one very powerful element that makes emotional intimacy with intercourse impossible even if it possibly allows orgasm and some sort of physical satisfaction.)

If these people are wrong, as I think they are, that (unprotected) intercourse is necessary for (sexual) intimacy or even sexual satisfaction, then in today's society, they sometimes are unwisely and unnecessarily risking pregnancy, VD, and AIDS, and advocating others do the same, when they have sex, particularly when it is with a new partner or partner who may have acquired a sexually transmitted disease. They are unnecessarily and unwisely risking these things to achieve an intimacy that may result from intercourse but does not really require it to occur. Those teenagers and other sexual novices in particular, who feel more compelled to have sex than they do to abstain from sex in spite of the risk of pregnancy, disease, and the emotional heartbreaks, disappointments, and crises that sex in a relationship sometimes intensifies, may be well advised to try (to learn) safely petting each other to orgasm to see whether that does not provide sufficient pleasure and intimacy instead of having intercourse, even with a condom. Such sex may at least

prevent risk of pregnancy and disease. I think there are positions and techniques for petting that can be very pleasurable, satisfying, and intimate.

Further, petting to climax may even require or result in more intimacy because it generally takes a bit more experimentation, exploration, and more communication, and is in some ways more difficult than intercourse is. It is generally worth the time and "trouble" to learn, and it can be very pleasurable to do so if one, and one's partner, are patient and understanding. ***Sexually and emotionally mutually satisfying intercourse*** also actually frequently tends to require patience and understanding, but that point escapes some people, particularly some novices (both male and female – males because they do not know how or care enough to bring a woman to orgasm, females because they do not know how to help the male help them, and both because they mistakenly think getting themselves or each other to climax is all that is ever emotionally, or even physically important about sex). I suspect learning to pet someone to climax generally will require more of a commitment, more understanding, greater sensitivity, more tenderness and concern than just having intercourse. The mutual exercise and demonstration of these traits to each other can help produce emotional intimacy and appreciation with each other, over and above that produced by the physical pleasure alone. In some cases it will even be more fun.

Novices in particular need to remember that touching can be very pleasurable, that pleasure is much of the point of sex, and that in sex, the "journey" can be half (or more) of the thrill and enjoyment. Finally in this regard, it may be that the presupposition one has about how sex ought to be to be physically and/or emotionally satisfying determines what actually will satisfy a person. People who think they have to have intercourse (protected or not) to be satisfied, may indeed need that generally. People who do not presuppose that may be satisfied by such things as petting (to climax, or even sometimes not to climax, which for some people may be unwarranted or frightening). The latter presupposition may

be a safer and happier one; and if all it takes to be true is an early introduction to it –an introduction to it before one gets the idea that only intercourse is the point or thrill of sex– then perhaps such early introduction is an important thing to attempt.

Now some people claim they cannot reach a state of emotional intimacy in some cases with another person until and unless they have had satisfying sex (however achieved) that removes all the emotional barriers, defenses, anxieties, and tensions that prevent intimacy (in the sense of closeness, openness, honest communication, and sharing of private and personal feelings and ideas)– barriers that nothing else seems to eliminate in the way that satisfying sex does. These people seem to think that sexual intimacy is (psychologically) easier to attempt or achieve than other kinds of intimacy. For some people, perhaps it is easier. But even when this is true, the sex itself is still not the emotional intimacy; it is just a method of attaining it. Even for these people, if they are right about themselves (as opposed to just unaware of other methods that might work just as well), sex leads to emotional intimacy, and may even be a part of it, but it is not the emotional or "real" intimacy itself, or is not the most important part of it.

I claimed earlier that there can be intercourse without emotional intimacy. (Rape, of course, is an obvious example; but more relevant to this discussion are cases involving mutual willingness for sex.) One example is that portrayed in the movie Klute by Jane Fonda who plays a prostitute who, while she is moaning and talking passionately during intercourse with a client, is looking behind his back at her watch to see how much longer his session has. She is acting passionately and doing something that is physically intimate, but her heart and her mind are not in it. She is not passionate, just pretending to be. She is just doing her job. One does not have to be a prostitute to have intercourse one's heart or mind are not really involved in. One might have anxiety about finances, family, health, the problems of a friend or loved one, fear of discovery, pregnancy, or whatever, that sex at the time cannot override. One

might not feel particularly romantic, loving, or sexually interested at the time, and may only be obliging a partner one cares about. One might not be in love with one's partner, but only in heat –that is,only sexually or physically aroused– and that may cause a certain emotional distance even though the sex is physically satisfying, or may cause that distance as soon as the sex is physically satisfying. One might only be experimenting to see what sex is like (or is like with this person) and may find it physically good (or not) and yet not very emotionally satisfying or overcoming of alienation, loneliness, or emotional distance. One might feel some sort of peer or other kind of social pressure to have intercourse with someone, or at a time, one really would rather not, but is afraid to refuse or does not know how to refuse without causing problems (like on a date with someone really special or important, or even on one's wedding night if one is really too tired or too emotionally exhausted to be really interested but feels that may not be a good time to voice such disinterest).

The above cases are perhaps only one step removed from a kind of physical intimacy that is certainly not generally emotionally intimate or even sexually intimate –going to the doctor for something like a pelvic exam, breast exam, testicle or prostate exam, proctoscopic or urinary tract exam. One might let a doctor examine one's most intimate or private anatomy without thereby feeling emotionally close to, or psychologically and confidentially comfortable with, that doctor.

Oppositely, I think it is quite possible for at least some people to feel very close, open, loving, and able to be sharing with each other, or with many people, without having to have any sort of physical or sexual intimacy with them. A shared lovely walk, beautiful sunset, experience with children, emotionally powerful movie or play, stimulating, enlightening, revealing, or personally compatible conversation, great chess game or tennis match or football season with one's teammates, the completion of writing a book together or the completion of any sort of worthwhile and arduous chore together, attending the funeral of a mutual friend and sharing grief

or reflections on the meaning of (the friend's) life, surviving a harrowing experience together, or doing any of a number of things might make people feel very close and very comfortable with each other and cause or make possible emotional intimacy.

Given that these other experiences can cause or lead to intimacy, and given that sexual intercourse is not always intimate, I now wish to return to the issue of actual and/or unprotected intercourse as somehow being the only (even sexually) intimate behavior. The examples mentioned above on behalf of both propositions make me really unable to understand anyone's contention that only intercourse without a condom or some other form of protection is (sexually) intimate. I certainly, for example, think it is very sexually intimate generally for a couple to be willingly and/or lovingly caressing each other's genitals in a way that brings pleasure to each. I am not sure that any sort of intercourse makes it more intimate, even if it makes it feel somehow different or makes it even more pleasurable, or just easier, and even if it is the only way one might be able to cause or achieve orgasm, which generally it is not. Most people, at most times, do not let just anyone play with their private parts to give them pleasure (nor do they play with just anyone else's). That is a very physically or sexually intimate thing to do —a very personal and generally private thing to do. And if two people can pet or otherwise stroke each other to orgasm, they may choose to do so, rather than have intercourse, because that is more physically satisfying at the time, more interesting at the time, less risking of pregnancy, less risking of disease, more pleasurable at the time, more exhilarating at the time (like surreptitiously when at the table of a dinner party), or because of whatever reason. And all that seems pretty (sexually, if not otherwise) intimate to me.

Further, as many poorer X-rated movies demonstrate, there are plenty of positions and motions of intercourse that seem purely mechanical and not very emotionally intimate or personal, and sometimes not even physically pleasurable at all. Participants prolong orgasm long past any pleasurable reason for doing so; they

even seem to get into and remain in positions guaranteed to prevent any kind of pleasure (that might encourage orgasm). And this seems to be a rather senseless or purposeless, pointless activity —seeing how long two people can have sex by having sex without any particular pleasure for either partner. People in real life sometimes experiment or try such positions. Sometimes a position will be good for one partner but not the other; sometimes it will not be particularly good for either. Pleasureless positions of intercourse (or positions of pleasureless intercourse) are hardly more intimate, and probably a good deal less intimate, than mutually pleasurable petting or kissing. There is certainly nothing emotionally intimate about such intercourse (other than the satisfaction, if any, of willingly making a sacrifice for someone else's pleasure, if they are having any).

When massage parlors first operated in the metropolitan area where I lived, I went to a few, not to have sex or even a massage (sex or a massage in places that looked like the ones in that city were not even remotely enticing to me; and the idea of having sex of any sort with someone who had sex with you only because you paid them to do it has never interested me at all), but to find out by asking questions what it was that I would be missing. I was interested in the price and what you got for that price, what the women were like, and what kinds of men would frequent such places (besides police looking for evidence to make arrests). Talking with the women revealed some very interesting attitudes toward sex. (One group was watching a soap opera in the "lobby" and was really upset at one of the characters because on the soap she was having an affair with a married man. They thought that was terrible. They didn't consider what they were doing as being anything like that.) But the most intriguing comment to me was by the girl who told me their price for a "massage" was $45 (this was around 1974) for a half hour. I asked why it was so much more expensive there when some other places just down the street were only charging around $10. She said, "Those places only give you 'a hand job' (for that)". She meant to disparage such places, of course. I didn't say

anything, but it seemed to me the $10 place then would be the better deal. If I wanted to pay for sex with someone I did not care about, who did not care about me, who I probably would not be interested in even asking out, in a place that was at best unromantic (and at worst sleazy and repulsive), I think I would rather have it for the least amount of money, the least amount of physical contact, and the least chance of catching anything or risking one of those people being the mother of a child of mine. To me, it was not that you got more sexual intimacy for more money; just more risk for more money. And all the places seemed to me to offer too much sexual or physical "intimacy" for the price –even if it had been free.

The Concept of Intimacy

In the above I explain that many people desire emotional intimacy and that it does not always accompany sexual intimacy and may, and in fact often does, occur in non- sexual circumstances. Sexual (or physical) intimacy and emotional intimacy are not the same thing and do not necessarily occur at the same time (e.g., a medical exam may go beyond physical intimacy without being in any way emotionally intimate in so doing).

I want to try to give a fuller characterization here of what emotional intimacy is. Before I do that, I want to emphasize I am not necessarily talking about sex, and that many intimate moments can occur in daily life if people were open to them. Just as we can talk about intimate dinner parties or intimate social gatherings, any meeting between people offers the potential for intimacy of conversation or an intimate exchange of ideas or the sharing of a meaningful and intimate experience that has nothing to do with immodesty, with sex, or with matters of normal privacy, sensitivity, or potential embarrassment. While revealing private details of one's life may be an intimate experience, it is only a special case of a far more general concept – that of sharing, in a sense given below, ideas, feelings, or experiences that are personally important and deeply meaningful. When sex is not particularly meaningful it is not emotionally intimate. And since many things besides sex can be

deeply meaningful or personally important, there are many more opportunities for emotional intimacy than might be generally thought. And those opportunities do not need to be preludes to attempts at sexual intimacy or a romantic relationship. While loving relationships may include intimacy, intimacy does not need to include love or romance. Intimacy can be, and I think in many cases should be, a part of simple ethical behavior toward others, whether inside or outside of a loving relationship.

Emotions and feelings can be divided in the following ways: those which have a logical component attached to them, and those which do not, in the following sense. One might, for example, feel giddy and excited or happy, but for no apparent reason. It is not necessary that something in particular is on his or her mind, for one to feel happy or for one to feel giddy, or sad. "I just feel really good today; I don't know why; nothing particular has happened" is a perfectly common answer on occasion to the question why one seems so excited or happy or giddy. Similarly, one might say, "I don't know why I feel sad today; nothing bad has happened that I know of. I just feel kind of blue." Those emotions do not require any particular state of affairs or other state of mind. They can exist, in a sense, by themselves. Similarly one might feel "edgy" or "anxious" or "on edge" without feeling anxious or on edge **about** anything in particular.

But other feelings are different. They require some companion idea or some companion circumstance to actually exist in the world. For example, although one can feel edgy in general without thinking something is or might be wrong, one cannot feel "edgy about" some particular thing without thinking that there might be something wrong with that thing – say, a friend's surgical outcome or test for a disease or an exam grade. Or, as I have written in Guilt and Forgiveness, feeling guilty requires feeling one has done something actually wrong, not just feeling nervous about being disgraced or punished because others will think one has done wrong even though one thinks one's actions were justified and were not wrong. One cannot **feel guilty** unless one believes one did something

wrong, even though one might have feelings that are very much like guilt feelings if one is simply afraid of being caught for something one knows others might mistakenly disapprove. In order to feel guilty one does not have to have actually done something wrong, but one has to believe one has.

I believe that emotional intimacy is one of those types of feelings that has not only an emotional aspect or a feeling aspect, but that must have certain circumstances or companion ideas attached to it as well, or what one has is not intimacy but only a false sense of intimacy. The **feeling** of a false sense of intimacy will be the same as the **feeling** of an actual intimate moment, but it will not be the same. But it will turn out there are two somewhat different sorts of circumstances or companion ideas that might be involved with feelings of intimacy. These are related but different enough that in one usage or view, what counts as an intimate experience might not count as an intimate experience with the other usage.

To begin with a fairly clear cut case, suppose two people have had sex and one feels it was truly a wonderful, bonding experience, and just feels a great deal of love, closeness, and affection for the partner and believes that the partner feels the same way, and that this has been a truly emotionally, as well as sexually, intimate moment between them. The partner, however, may have his/her mind on some business or other concern, or may be just trying to please his/her mate but is not really all that interested even in sex, but is willing to oblige. Perhaps one of them is a writer and during the love-making gets an idea to work into a short-story or a novel or essay in progress. While they are outwardly "there" for and with their partner, even in conversation, what is really going on in their mind is the development of this idea that has somehow popped into their consciousness. If the partner is so involved with his/her own feelings of closeness at this moment that s/he doesn't notice the other person is actually distracted or thinking about something else, the first person will have considered the time to be a really intimate experience, but may not if they find out the other person did not share that feeling and was, in fact, rather distracted during the time.

There are two possible reactions by the partner who felt there was intimacy. If the person who described the experience as intimate found out that the partner really had his/her mind elsewhere, s/he might say something like "I thought we were having a moment of real intimacy, but it wasn't; it just seemed that way to me. His/her mind really wasn't on it." Or they might say something like "I thought we were having a moment of intimacy but it was just intimate for me, not for him/her. His/her mind was elsewhere." I want to discuss the first case first because it is less complex and more straightforward.

Intimacy Requiring an Actual "Meeting of Minds"

Take the cases where one says or believes, or sees the reasonableness in statements such as "I thought we were having a moment of real intimacy, but it wasn't; it just seemed that way to me. His/her mind really wasn't on it." I would like to suggest the following as a way of explaining what it means for an experience to be emotionally intimate:

For an experience between two or more people to be intimate, each must be aware that the experience is being focused on and appreciated as important and significantly meaningful[1] other(s) and to him/herself and each must be appreciative that this shared focus and shared appreciation or meaningfulness of the phenomenon or experience itself is occurring.

There are therefore at least six things that must occur: (1) each person must simultaneously focus on some phenomenon or experience, (2) the phenomenon or experience must be a good one and recognized as such by the participants, (3) the phenomenon or experience must be simultaneously meaningful for each person, (4) each person must appreciate (e.g., be thankful for or happy about) the meaningfulness of the experience or the phenomenon, (5) each person must be aware of his/her own and each others' (A) focus, (B) feeling of meaningfulness, and (C) appreciation of the experience, and (6) each person must feel appreciation for the sharing of that meaningfulness and for the mutual appreciation of the experience.

If any of the individuals involved lacks any of these things, then the experience is not intimate either for them or with them for the others, in this sense of intimacy. It is not only not an intimate experience for them, it is not an intimate experience with[2] them. That is why if they are distracted by something else and either do not have their mind on the same experience the other person or people do, or they do not know or appreciate the meaningfulness to the other person, or they do not experience any meaningfulness themselves, the experience is not really intimate – either for them or with them. In this sense, the experience is not intimate for them nor is it intimate for the other other person, though it may have seemed so to that other person at the time.

Notice that sex is just one kind of activity in which this sort of thing can occur – as both people are focused on and appreciative of both their own and (generally) the other person's emotional and physical pleasure. It is that successful attention and appreciation, rather than the mere physical pleasure itself (no matter how good that might be) that makes the experience an emotionally intimate, rather than just a physically pleasurable, one.

"One-sided" Intimacy

Now look at the case where someone says something like ""I thought we were having a moment of intimacy but it was just intimate for me, not for him/her. His/her mind was elsewhere."

There are, I think, two possible, different meanings or conditions for intimacy when someone says something of this sort or considers it to be a reasonable kind of statement:

(1)It can mean either that an experience is, and remains, intimate to a person when it seems or appears, **at the time** it occurs, to meet the above conditions even though that person is mistaken about the other person's other people's focus or senses of appreciation and even if the other person finds out about the mistake later, or it can mean

(2)that an experience is intimate to, and for, a person if and when she or he finds it personally meaningful, good, and is appreciative

of it and is grateful s/he shared that experience with the other person(s) even though the other person(s) did not experience it in the same way with her or him.

No Need to Choose Between Mutual and One-sided Intimacy

Since in actual usage, people do talk about intimacy as either being one-sided or as needing to be mutual in order to occur at all, it is not that there is only one definition we must choose. Both are correct because both occur in ordinary use. The important thing is to understand what is meant and what has actually occurred. It is not only important to understand what others mean when they talk about intimate experiences, but it is also, and perhaps more, important for oneself to understand that any perception of mutual intimacy may be mistaken and that this can have unconscious ramifications for how one feels about the experience later, depending on which sense of intimacy one harbors in some latent or undeveloped, unarticulated way. If someone finds out that a wonderful experience they mistakenly thought was mutual actually was not mutual, as long as it is not a case involving deception, they should not abandon their wonder or appreciation for the experience just because they found out it was not intimate for both of them. Mutually intimate experiences are better generally, but that does not mean one- sided intimate experiences are necessarily bad. Again, as long as no intentional deception is involved.

The other important thing is to understand what sorts of behaviors and feelings are appropriate to intimacies of each kind. For example, college students often become enamored of a teacher because the teacher may address a topic or issue that is important to the student in a way that is enlightening and particularly meaningful to that student. The student may take that as a sign of intellectual intimacy – a kind of meeting of the minds. This is often a case of one- sided feeling of intimacy, and the student needs to be aware of that before s/he does something embarrassing or compromising. The teacher, being supposedly older and wiser, should also be aware of what may be the belief of the student and not take advantage of someone's mistaking one-sided intimacy or a

feeling of (mutual) intimacy for actual mutual intimacy. Moreover, each should know that a meeting of the minds does not then mean that a meeting of bodies is necessarily appropriate – that intellectual intimacy is not the same as, and does not necessarily justify, other forms of intimacy . Just because a meaningful meeting of the minds is today somewhat rare (in American society, for example), it does not need to be confused with love or infatuation. It need not be an aphrodisiac just because it is desirable and exciting.

Opening and Recognizing Greater Possibilities for Intimacy

Since the crucial initial aspect for intimacy is sharing in what is good and personally important to another person and having it be important to you while you are together, intimacy can be facilitated or established by caring about another person and helping bring about what is important to them in a way that they particularly appreciate and that you are happy to provide.

There are often opportunities to do this if one simply takes the time to notice or think about what is important to others or to probe gently in order to find it out (without prying or being intrusive or ill-mannered[3]. Any time one is particularly helpful to another person, especially perhaps in meeting their normally unrecognized needs or needs they do not even know they have, or needs which they are initially hesitant to express, the seeds of intimacy have a chance to flourish. Any time one can address in a genuine way something that is interesting and meaningful to another person, especially if it is a topic that normally people are initially hesitant to address, one has a chance to establish intimacy. I met a woman in a wheel chair one time at a social event, and asked her why she was in it. She said she had multiple sclerosis. Since that affects your body more than your mind, and prevents you from doing what your mind would like to do and thinks it ought to be able to do, and is as much frustrating as it is debilitating, I said "That is a pain in the ass, isn't it?" And she looked up at me with a moment of surprise and then broke into the biggest smile and said "That is exactly what it is!"

In another instance, I visited my college roommate's fiancée in a

hospital ward after she had an appendectomy. While I was there, a sixteen year old girl was futilely calling for a nurse, and I went over to her bed and asked if I could help or if she needed some sort of medical assistance.

She said it was nothing. But an older woman called me over and told me the girl's bedpan needed emptying and that was why she was calling for a nurse. I went back to the girl and said I could empty the bedpan if someone would just point me the way to a bathroom. The girl was totally embarrassed, but I just picked up the bed pan, emptied it, washed it out and returned it. She was mortified. I just smiled and said "Oh, I'm sure that you would have done the same for me." She laughed, and we were okay after that. Her mother soon returned from her lunch and took me aside and told me that her daughter had been an active person, a cheerleader at school, when one day suddenly she became paralyzed from the waist down and no one knew what was the cause. The girl, being young, was sure that she would recover, but everyone else was terribly worried and all around her were treating her with kid gloves. I sensed that had begun to wear thin with her and that it was even beginning to harm her confidence of a recovery. We talked a while, and as I left she asked whether I would come back to see her again the next day. I had already walked part way out of the ward and I turned and said "Of course; just don't go running off with anyone else in the meantime." All the women in the ward gasped simultaneously at what they considered to be an accidental poor choice of words. But I had chosen my words carefully, and the girl's smile at them lit up the room. It was a delight to see. She had been telling her mother that she was going to get well and leave the hospital on her own two legs, and she and I were the only ones who believed that, or talked as though we did. I saw no reason to discourage her at a time that doctors had no clue what either the diagnosis or prognosis was.

One may as well act on hope, and the energy it brings, when there is no good evidence hope cannot be fulfilled. I told her that before she left, I wanted the first dance. Two or three weeks later, I was

able to escort her out the door on her own two feet – after talking a nurse out of the required wheelchair exit at the threshold. She had recovered. Last I heard, in talking with her mother by phone, she had made a complete and total recovery, had grown up, married, and had children of her own and all was well.

I do wedding photography, and weddings are situations that can be fraught with anxiety for brides, grooms, families, and there are two kinds of wedding photographers – those who keep their distance and just take pictures of whatever is in front of their camera at the appropriate times, and those who, as one photographer one time put it, not only take pictures but "become for a few hours on her wedding day the best friend a bride has" – the person who understands and appreciates her state of mind, her varying needs for guidance, focus, relaxation, distraction, perspective, and attentiveness to the interests of all her guests, not just those who happen to engage her attention at any one time. This is true, though sometimes to a lesser extent for one's relationship with the groom, with the bride's mother and father, and even, in some cases with the parents of the groom, who often are not sure what their proper role or amount of visibility ought to be. If you can help everyone have a good time meeting each others' needs and interests and those of their guests, they will be most appreciative and one will get heartfelt expressions of gratitude before the film is developed and the pictures seen. It is not uncommon to hear helpful photographers praised as "great photographers" at the wedding reception itself even though there will be no visible evidence of their photography skills for at least a couple of days. Even in the studio, many people would prefer to have a root canal than to get their picture taken. To understand that and to overcome that feeling by showing you understand it and by being able to make them feel comfortable in front of the camera is, I think, an opportunity for intimacy, however short-lived it might be.

Similarly, teaching school even in a large lecture hall, or conducting a business meeting, affords opportunities for teachers to foster

intimacy with their students and bosses with their staff. Good actors and entertainers can establish intimacy with their patrons in certain theaters. A theater that seats 300 to 500 people may be quite intimate, when the production is really good and somehow tuned to satisfying the audience's needs, and people will come from the performance exclaiming what an intimate theater or intimate performance or intimate experience it was.

Many doctors, nurses, and medical assistants can be intimate on one level while remaining properly professionally detached on another. I had to have a barium enema and set of X-rays one time, and it was not the most comfortable of circumstances in which to be, between the potential humiliation and the concern for the outcome. The med tech made it much easier for me from the very outset when she put on her rubber gloves and said to me, with a twinkle in her eyes as she looked into mine, while I sat on the X-ray table in my hospital gown, "For the next half hour I am going to become your new best friend." Of course, a statement like that might not be helpful at all for a male tech to say to a female patient, but when she said it, she was saying in essence, with a good touch of humor, that she knows this is scary, embarrassing, and uncomfortable but she is going to do her best not to let it be that way, and she is giving confidence that she will be successful in that endeavor. She was doing the difficult job of essentially establishing an emotional intimacy that overrode and put into a minor perspective the physical intimacy that was the nature of her professional task that morning. The fact that an hour later she would have another patient and would have totally forgotten about me, did not matter to me. It was her attention and concern for me at the time and the effort she made to succeed with me at the time that mattered, and that personalized the experience in a good way.

It may be thought that people who can do that well under trying circumstances have a gift, but the first part of having such a gift is recognizing the need for it, and being willing to take the risk of making oneself vulnerable to an unkind or cold response, in order to try to help a sensitive fellow human being through a difficult

time. It requires the same gift to help people in what may start out seeming to be normal circumstances. But it is a gift that can be cultivated. Every contact affords the potential opportunity to bond with another in a personal and intimate way, without necessarily jeopardizing professional distance, integrity, and competency. But for many people it is difficult to initiate intimacy because they try to hide their own vulnerability and isolation and their most private thoughts they mistakenly believe are theirs alone and too unique or strange to express. Often they are afraid of meeting a rebuff to any overture to meaningful conversation. And some people are indeed resistant to comments that try to get "through to them". Unfortunately they also sometimes, or temporarily, ruin opportunities not only for themselves but for the next person as they make the initiator feel they are doing something wrong and hesitant to try with the next person.

The trick is to realize that for the most part, if you have thought up something or are troubled by something, others will have entertained the same ideas or be receptive to it, but you have to bring it up. For example, at weddings, while everyone else is saying affectedly polite, saccharine things about the couple's getting married, if you say instead that you think weddings are appropriate for young people because they are too naive to know better, you will be surprised at how much smiling agreement you get and what a torrent of confirming comments will follow. At a grocery store one time, two women were standing for a long time in front of the canned tuna shelf and I walked up and said "What, are you guys standing here so long because you are trying to find a dented can to serve to your husbands?" And they both looked at me and said with a laugh "You know, there have been times I've thought about that." The odds were good.

One time I thought I had really overstepped my bounds and I said something I immediately had regretted until it turned out later to have been for the best. Like the med tech mentioned above, it seems to me generally best to address with humor what is likely

bothering people than to try to pretend there is nothing wrong and let people just suffer in silence and maintain either a distant or strained atmosphere. I was photographing a wedding in which the father of the groom, who had been teasing me earlier, was noticeably tense while I was trying to take the group and family pictures. I tried all the usual ploys to get him to relax and smile, and nothing was working. He was older, and his children, all standing there in the family photo, were adults. The father had been divorced once or twice before, as had the bride's father, and all the mothers and stepmothers were in attendance. I thought maybe that was bothering him or somehow making him very uncomfortable, so I wanted to address it in a humorous way. But the minute I said what I did, I felt I had gone too far. While he was standing in the group, not responding to my most recent normal attempt to get him to smile, I stopped and said for all to hear, "I just don't understand it; I would have thought that being here in the same room at the same time with all the women you have ever been married to would have made you really happy." His children roared with laughter, and when they stopped laughing he smiled at me and said "Where is your car parked?" And I said "If you only hurt my car, I will consider myself lucky." After that he was great in the pictures, and later at the reception he came up to me and put his arm on my shoulder and thanked me for helping him loosen up and enjoy the wedding. He said he really appreciated it.

It does not always require humor. In photographing people who are nervous, it often makes them feel more comfortable if you say that you or they need to move a bit because you don't have a flattering angle, or that they need to change position or clothes because in two dimensions the angle or that outfit will make them look fat even though it is not that way in real life. By being honest with them about what doesn't look good and why, people seem to have more confidence that you know what you are doing and they get really pleased when you do say "that looks great now" because they know you sincerely think so. If you only say good things from

the beginning, no matter what they do, most people are suspicious and become even more self- conscious.

In teaching philosophy at a black college, I often challenged my students' ideas, even about racism (though I am white and have always lived in suburbs, and they were primarily from an inner city). Whenever I disagreed with students about anything, I asked them to justify their position and I argued with them when I thought they were making reasoning errors. And I would almost never let any disagreement drop until we had resolved it. There were a few things we couldn't resolve, but I had made clear to them, and they knew I meant it, that their grades did not depend on their agreeing with me, so they were free to maintain their position unless I could honestly convince them otherwise. Usually I could; sometimes I couldn't. What was interesting to me was that they really appreciated that I tried. One class said this was the first time for them in school that any teacher ever cared what they thought and cared enough to disagree with them. Another time, we were talking about racism in America, near the end of the term, and in the midst of the arguments and explanations, one of the girls said "But you don't understand. Whenever black and white people are together in this country, it is in a white area of town and the blacks are outnumbered, which is intimidating. You never see white people in a black area of town where they are the minority." The other students all concurred. For a minute I thought she had a point, and then I remembered I was a white person sitting there in a black college in a classroom in the midst of only black students. I held up the backs of my hands to her and said, "What about this? All of you are black and I'm still white, aren't I? And I am here." The other students looked surprised, but the girl who had made the comment looked the most surprised, as her mouth just dropped open and her eyes widened. Then she said what was one of the most touching things I had ever heard: "But you aren't white; you are just Rick!" The others nodded in agreement. And I said it was precisely my point about them – that they too were persons first and should see themselves that way

and expect other people to see them that way too, and that most white people by and large then often would. There was far more to the discussion and this was not meant to by a synopsis, but just one point. But I think this particular conversation in class occurred because I work very hard to make my classes, no matter how large, become intimate and intellectually safe and comfortable. One of the emotionally hardest parts of teaching is having a term end after you have been able to achieve that atmosphere, and then having to start all over again to try to achieve it with a new group.

Some instances mix humor with poignancy. I was talking one time with a young lady I was photographing, who was in my studio with her mother. Somehow the conversation turned to a point where I mentioned that in Homewood (an adjacent suburb) there had been a long time, highly effective, and revered mayor who was one of the nicest guys in the world, and who adored his wife and his twin daughters. But often in social situations when he was introduced to someone new whom he found out was not married, he would ask with mock sincerity "Then what do you do for aggravation?" It was an "ice-breaker" for him, and it always worked because he was obviously such a loving person and a proud, doting husband and father. When I finished my story about him and mentioned his name, the girl said "He was my grandfather." And the mother said she was one of the twins. I hadn't known that. It was a nice moment.

Being open and genuine with others about normally considered private thoughts will not always be welcome, even if you are not trying to be humorous but are more straightforwardly obviously trying to be kind, but I think it will be welcome far more often than not. And when it is, it can lead to cherished moments and memories for the other person or for both of you —moments that help make life on this planet more intimate, and thus by the very nature of intimacy, not so isolated and alone.

[1]I explain what it is for an experience to be ***meaningful*** in chapter 24 of *The Meaning of Love*, but for my purpose here it is sufficient to say that it involves something recognized by someone as important to them on a **personal** level, which may or may not have anything to

do with any practical importance to them as well. In other words if some financial transaction is occurring which gratifies both people, and they both are appreciative of the transaction at a pragmatic level, that will not necessarily be an intimate experience. On the other hand if, say (as in one of the Saturn automobile commercials) a car salesman and his client appreciate the importance to her of her buying her first car and all that it entails for its significance in her life (fiscal ability and responsibility, maturity, independence, rite of passage into adulthood, etc.) and they both realize all this, that transaction, though practical and financial, also takes on a kind of intimacy though it may be transient and perhaps even shortly forgotten. (Return to text.)

[2]There is an ambiguity in this sense of "with" that I do not know how to make precise other than by an example. Suppose there are five people involved in a conversation that is intimate in the sense under discussion for four of them but not for the fifth person. The conversation is still intimate for the four people even though they are "with" the fifth person, but the intimacy does not include him though the conversation does. They are with him and intimate (with each other), but they are not intimate with him. This kind of verbal anomaly only occurs when two or more people are intimate in the sense above and in the company of one or more other people who do not meet the conditions. If there are only two people involved, and at least one of them does not meet the conditions, then in **this** kind of understanding of intimacy under discussion, the experience is not intimate for either. (Return to text.)

[3]One way of politely probing is simply to make a comment that is not rude, prying, indiscrete, or embarrassing and which gives the other person a great opportunity to respond in a frank and personal way if they wish or to ignore, wave off, or make light of your comment if they do not. (Return to text.)

Key Takeaways

- Intimacy does not always involve sex or sexual intercourse.
- Sex does not always involve (emotional) intimacy.
- Even intimacy that is primarily sexual can be achieved without intercourse.

Key Terms

- ***Sexually and emotionally mutually satisfying intercourse*** frequently tends to require patience and understanding.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What is one way to define emotional intimacy?
- ***Question***: Do opportunities for emotional intimacy also require sexual intimacy or a romantic relationship? Why or why not?

Chapter 32 Relationships After Sex

Chapter 32 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Recognize that sex can change a relationship for better or for worse, depending in part how the sex goes for each, but also depending on how each feels afterward about having it, which can be considerably different from how one feels before having it.

Watch this video or scan the QR code to see why do men change after sex.

It is a correct principle of ethics to take into account the particular circumstances in a situation in order to decide the right course of action. One should apply his brakes in his car if a child runs out into the street in front of him, though one should not drive about arbitrarily jamming on the brakes between intersections. Similarly, one might properly drive faster down a broad boulevard than one should drive down a narrow street with parked cars on both sides beyond which little children are playing. If one is playing poker, one would be foolish to bet the same on every hand regardless of the value of that hand. Circumstances determine what the right or prudent act is whether in ethics, business, poker, or whatever.

Further, it is fair and rational to act similarly under similar circumstances, unless there is some overriding reason not to – for example, in poker, one might sometimes want to bluff with a hand worth even less than one had folded previously, or a baseball pitcher may want to throw a different pitch from the one that had worked earlier in the "same" situation to the same batter, since the batter may now be looking for it. (Hence, it is not exactly the

same psychological situation, though it may be the same playing or scoring situation.) But without some overriding reason to the contrary, circumstances in a situation determine what is right to do, and similar circumstances demand similar actions. Hence, to say that situations determine right behavior is not to say there are no standards or principles for situations nor that all situations are different in relevant ways.

Now one of the things that should go into consideration of what act is right are the desires of people who would be affected by your choice, including, of course, your own desires. For example, in deciding what present to buy a child for its birthday, one should at least consider what the child wants or might like. This does not mean, of course, that that is the only consideration – a twelve year old may want a big motorcycle that might be unsafe; or someone may want a car that the family could not prudently afford. But certainly it seems to me that if the choice is, say, between one kind of book and another, or between one kind of toy and another, of equal cost, and there is not some particular reason the child should not be given the one he wants, then the right choice is to give the child the one he actually wants or would like.

Similarly in deciding what vegetable to cook for yourself for dinner, between two equal costing ones that are equally appropriate, nutritious, and available, the one you want is the right one to choose. Sometimes desires may even override other considerations. If a desire for something extravagant is very strong, one may sometimes rightly splurge and indulge oneself. Other times, such as in going off a strict medical diet, if that would cause serious physical consequences, the strong desire should be overridden. Desires should always be taken into account, but they are not the final or sole considerations in deciding proper actions.

In sex, as in many cases involving desires, sometimes desires are stronger or more important than they are at other times, and might have more weight as factors or reasons to consider. It is very easy to think sex is right when you are in the mood, and then

later to feel disgusted, guilty, repentant, or remorseful, after one has indulged one's desires and spent one's passion. Inexperienced people, particularly younger people, often feel terrible after a sexual experience, whether it was intercourse or even something potentially less disastrous, such as petting or even kissing. You may feel you have led the other on or perhaps made a non-verbal commitment you did not really intend. You may feel you have taken advantage of another person's mood at the time, or that the other person took advantage of yours. Or, released from the influence of strong desire, you may now simply feel guilty that you gave into those desires rather than being able to overcome them as **now** you feel you could have.

There is a distinction to be made in cases like this, since there is feeling guilty that is justified and feeling guilty that is not justified. And it is not just with regard to relationships and to sex.

If the act you did was wrong and you only did it because your desires overpowered your reason, then feeling guilty is justified; but if the act was right and you only feel guilty afterward because afterward you would not choose or do the same thing if you had to choose then while not being in the mood, then you are feeling unjustifiably guilty because you are confusing making a choice under one set of circumstances with making a choice under another set.

For example, first outside of sex. If while working at some task, someone becomes so hungry that they cannot concentrate properly on their work, even though they may want to get the work done, it might be better for them to go ahead and break for lunch or dinner and return to work, than to try to work straight through. If so, then they should not feel guilty or weak- willed afterward just because they now have the strength and seeming resolve they lacked before. However, if they eat so much they do not feel like working, if they take so long they miss a deadline, if they eat food that disagrees with them and makes them unable to work, or if they break an important diet, their guilt feelings would be justified.

Similarly with regard to sleeping or taking a nap when you are too exhausted to function efficiently or sufficiently. After the nap, if you then perform properly, it would be silly to berate yourself for having taken it, just because you forgot how tired and inefficient you were before you did. Of course if you oversleep, or if you were really not as tired as you thought but were impersistent, just bored, or just procrastinating, then you should feel guilty because you were guilty of doing the wrong thing.

Part of maturing is learning to know beforehand the likely consequences of various actions, including how you will feel afterward; and part of maturing is developing the resolve to withstand, or the ability to harmlessly assuage, the desire to do things you know are wrong or that will unavoidably make you feel so bad afterward that you are better off not doing them. But you should not feel bad about things that were right under particular circumstances just because those circumstances changed into new ones which, had **they** been the ones occurring at the time, would have made the act wrong. Sleeping when you are exhausted is not like sleeping when you are lazy; eating when you are famished is not like eating when you are frustrated or unhappy; having sex when circumstances are otherwise right and you are in the mood is not like having sex when circumstances are wrong but your passion clouds your reason or overpowers your will. Feeling rested later does not indicate you were lazy before; being indifferent to food after eating does not mean you were wrong to eat before; and being undesirous of sex after having it does not by itself mean you did the wrong thing when you had sex before.

Particularly young and inexperienced people can feel tremendously guilty after initial intimate encounters of whatever stage. Sometimes they can even feel so guilty they can ruin an experience or a relationship by doing or saying something to the partner under the distress of overwhelming guilt feelings that they would not have said had they been able to wait for the tide of guilt and distress to naturally subside. Often the guilt feelings are mixed with, or really are just, fear – fear of being discovered, fear

of pregnancy, fear of entering into a relationship or a stage of a relationship one is not ready for or really does not want, fear of not being in control, fear of having been intimate with the wrong person, fear of having been used, or of having embarrassed yourself, etc., etc., etc. Most fears subside with time and that is one really good reason not to say anything nasty or upsetting to one's partner while in the grip of fear one confuses with guilt. One can be honest about one's feelings of fear or guilt; but if one is abusive and insensitive to the other person instead of sensitively and honestly tactful, one could very much regret that later, or it could at least be unnecessarily damaging to the relationship and the experience.

I would like to make another distinction now that relates to making rational decisions, particularly ones whose results turn out badly or worse than you expected. First, however, I do not mean to imply by all this that sex, even first encounters, always turns out badly or regrettably. When sex is right, when it adds to a relationship, and when no fear or guilt is felt, but only wonder, joy, appreciation, and closeness, it can be thrilling and beautiful indeed. However, those cases speak for themselves and are not problematic. Further, they are what everyone hopes for and many people expect. It is when these hopes and expectations are not met that problems arise which need addressing.

The distinction to be made is what is right versus what is reasonable. Baseball broadcasters make this distinction all the time when they talk about a manager's "playing the percentages so he cannot be second-guessed [criticized]" about a decision. Since we cannot always know the consequences of an act ahead of time, the reasonable thing to do may in fact turn out to be the wrong thing – if the circumstances aren't as you reasonably thought they were or if the results of your action do not turn out the way you reasonably expected them to. (Sometimes we may never know all, or even the most important, consequences of our actions, so we may never know whether our choice was the right one or the most beneficial one or not.) The best people can do is the rational or

reasonable thing and hope it turns out right. Most times it will; but when it does not one simply accepts the mistake, knowing he or she at least did their best and made the best and most rational choice available. In poker this is easy to see. Suppose in a poker game one bets a large, but affordable, amount on a hand with four kings in it. However this turns out, it is certainly a very reasonable bet because of the high probability (low risk) and affordable amount involved. If the hand wins, the player did the reasonable thing and the right thing; if it loses to a hand with four aces, the player still has done the reasonable thing, just simply the wrong thing. The bet is right or wrong when the player makes it, but the knowledge of which it is only becomes known when it and the opposing hands are compared. The reasonableness of the bet can be determined at any time that the circumstances are described. The reasonableness never changes, nor does proper awareness of it. If a man bets his mortgage on a king high hand in a straight poker game of knowledgeable players, that is a very unreasonable, and downright stupid bet – even if it wins. If the hand wins, the player is simply lucky. The bet was the right one to make at the time, but it was an irrational and stupid one.

One would not be wise to underwrite a player who makes those kinds of bets. (Now one could say of a wise bet that loses that it was the right bet when it was made, but the wrong bet once the hand was played. And one could say of the stupid bet that wins it was the wrong bet to make, but it became right once the hand was played. I think it would be much clearer and more accurate, however, to say that the first bet was rational but wrong, and the second was irrational but turned out to be right. The first person was really unlucky; the second, really lucky. That way you do not have to say things like each bet was both right and wrong. In the case of cards, what makes a bet right or not is generally simply whether it wins or not. The only times a losing bet might be right are (1) when a large loss on a good hand makes possible a successful bluff later with a bad hand, or (2) when the thrill of making the bet (watching others squirm, being able to brag about the loss later,

or whatever) or some other such intangible quality is worth more than the loss of the money involved. In the baseball case, the reason the manager cannot be justifiably criticized for "going with the percentages" assuming he is using the right percentages – that is, figuring in the relevant factors and those alone – for the situation, is that fans and the club cannot justifiably criticize a manager for unpredictable bad luck, just for mismanagement – inefficient, irrational, or stupid preparation and decisions.)

Using these cases only to explain the difference between rational choices and right choices, I would now like to return to cases concerning sexual behavior. It is slightly more complicated in that the consequences are not always so discernible, and are certainly not always as immediately known when indeed they are known at all.

There are occasions in which having sex might be rational and still turn out to be wrong. The most obvious is perhaps where every rational precaution is taken to prevent an undesirable pregnancy and that pregnancy miraculously occurs anyway. Other cases are those in which there is reason to believe that sex will enhance the relationship, but afterward the relationship seems to decline and deteriorate instead. Sometimes the sex itself is not good, and with people who cannot properly handle that, it can be devastating to a relationship. But sometimes, though the sex may be (somewhat) physically and emotionally good, it may precipitate some unexpected decline in feelings. This can happen in or out of marriage, so marriage is not a solution to the problem unless one somehow wants added pressure for a partner to stay in a relationship after sex, even though the relationship is hurt by its sexual aspect. And I do not believe that a decline in attraction after sex is always an example of someone not respecting anyone who has sex with them (outside of marriage). (I think the usual case in regard to respect is more like what one cartoon once expressed, showing a picture of a fellow getting dressed afterward and obviously filled with joy, saying to the girl still lying in the bed and looking

somewhat vulnerable: “Still respect you?! Wow! I really respect you now!”)

There can be either physical or ***emotional sexual incompatibility***, the latter probably being more common than the former, though in some cases, or with some people, emotional incompatibility can also make the physical aspect of sex unpleasant. (In many cases, though, women and perhaps particularly men can have physically pleasurable sensations and even orgasm, though the emotional aspect of the sexual time together is not pleasurable at all, or is empty.) Examples of emotional sexual incompatibility are cases where, say, one person wants tender caresses and the other person is not capable of tenderness in touch; or one likes to kiss hard, and the other gently; one likes to hug and cuddle and the other doesn’t; one might like to have an important conversation along with touching and making love and is intellectually stimulated by the physical closeness, whereas the other does not like to talk during and just wants to roll over and quietly go to sleep afterward; or where afterward one is very accepting of however it was and the other wants to do a running commentary, or give a verbal critique or grade.

It can simply happen that two perfectly loving people might find, upon experiencing anything from a kiss or cuddle, to whatever, that they do not like that aspect of the relationship with the other person very much at all. This does not mean necessarily that either was trying to use the other or to take advantage of the other sexually and simply does not care about them now that they have succeeded. (In fact, I myself do not understand why anyone would want to just have sex with someone with the preconceived intention of “dumping” the partner afterward. If the sex is good, it seems one would want to have more of it. And if you know ahead of time you do not like the person enough to want to continue to see them, why would you want to have sex with them at all; why would anyone want to have sex with someone they do not like well enough to want to be with? I can understand that someone may not want to have just a sexual relationship, and so may end a relationship that

seems to be or to have become just sexual in nature; and I can understand about feeling guilty after a sexual experience one is not ready for or wanting to end a relationship that was either physically or emotionally sexually unpleasant but I cannot understand dating someone with the prior intention of both having sex with them and then dumping them.)

My concern here is less about people taking advantage of each other than about relationships that wither or die because people cannot understand or cope with their feelings after sex, particularly a bad or somewhat unpleasant sexual experience. The first point is that such a sexual experience, though it may have been the wrong thing to do, may not have been the irrational thing to do. The two of you can have made a totally unpredictable mistake without thereby being blind, stupid, ignorant, uncaring, bad intentioned, or evil. The second point is that you should try to overcome the damage by discussing your feelings with each other and by trying to return to those areas of the relationship that you do enjoy. You may later be able to enjoy sex with each other, but if not, or until then, you should still be able to enjoy the same things you did earlier. Of course, if you are looking for a spouse or "fully" loving or compatible partner, you may not want to spend as much time with someone you discover may not fit that description for you. But that should not mean spending no time with them in areas you enjoy sharing. You may even be able to work out the problems in sex that at first occurred between you. Whether the relationship is later able to add good sexual experiences or whether it remains friendship or love without sexual aspects or attractions, it seems to me better to have discussed a bad sexual experience and prevailed over it and saved a developed relationship than to silently end, or let deteriorate, an otherwise good relationship. Discussing your feelings also has the merit of letting your partner know you did not simply plan to bed them and then abandon them, and it lets them know that an incompatibility between the two of you does not necessarily mean an inadequacy on their part. It helps let them know that you both

together made a mistake but that it was not necessarily a mistaken character judgment or a totally irrational or stupid mistake.

Sex is a learned behavior (though sometimes it can be learned fairly quickly) and like all learned behavior does not always proceed the way you would like it to, particularly at first. Inexperienced people may have just some simple technical problems that make their sexual experiences with each other rather traumatic and unenjoyable. This should be expected ahead of time, and, if it occurs, should be looked at as an obstacle to be overcome, not an irreparable impediment to continuing the relationship.

There are all kinds of books and films, etc. on sexual technique, some better than others, so I do not want to get into that matter, but I would like to discuss in the rest of this section some things somewhat related to technique that I have not seen discussed in such books.

First of all, difficulties and incompatibilities begin far removed from intercourse and orgasm. Young kids sometimes worry so much about where to put their noses when they kiss they actually do have a problem getting their noses out of the way. Getting the right lip angles and pressure too can sometimes be difficult for two people without much experience kissing and who do not know to approach slowly enough in a (first) kiss to make the proper, and eventually natural, "adjustments" with each other for a great kiss, or even to avoid accidentally bumping teeth or braces together. Even so seemingly simple a task as holding hands can have its pitfalls. When folding one's own hands together, some people naturally and comfortably put the fingers of their right hand above the corresponding fingers of their left. Others put their left fingers above the corresponding right ones. We have all seen couples who have trouble holding hands for very long even though they seem to want to; I suspect it is because each partner is uncomfortable with which fingers (or thumb) is on top. Incompatible hand holding is hardly a major problem, but it may cause some discomfort and even irritability between people who want to hold hands with each other and are unable to happily do so and who have no idea why that is.

Even in conversation with someone seated next to them, some people are more comfortable turning their head to their left; others, to their right. I have always been more comfortable looking to my left than to my right for conversation, and the idea of "parking" in a car (sitting on the left side) whether for conversation or kissing, has partially for that reason never appealed to me. I suspect things in a similar vein to this are which side of one's body one likes to lie on and on which side of the bed one likes to sleep or cuddle. Incompatibilities in these areas are only minor irritations, but they are irritations nonetheless.

Progressing to petting or caressing, there are plenty of people who still write magazine articles giving sexual advice about the best way to stimulate another person while caressing, without the slightest realization that it is different for different people – literally different strokes for different folks – and that one mainly needs to be open to some experimentation and possible initial lack of success. Also some sort of communication or sign by the one being caressed that something is more pleasant than something else, can help the one doing the caressing do it more pleasingly. A "good toucher" can often just feel in their fingers a response to their touch, but in cases where that sensitivity or response is missing, some more audible, visible, or physical sign by the one being caressed might help guide the caresser, making their caressing more pleasant for the one being caressed. You should not expect another to be able to find all your comfortable places with the right kind of touch you like right away, or even at all, without some kind of help or guiding response from you. This does not necessarily mean giving total directions and not allowing the caresser any chance to please you on his/her own and to experiment or play. Some people like to be able to discover some things you might like for themselves. At least give them some clue that they have, if and when they do.

When I was young I was not even sure why you were supposed to (try to) touch a girl's breasts, if you could. Sex was such a conquest fantasy idea among boys my age when I was growing up that I thought guys were only supposed to try to touch a girl or woman

to see if they could. If she let you, that was great, because she was not supposed to let you (for some equally obscure reason). It never occurred to me at that time that the girl might actually enjoy being caressed on her breasts by someone she liked and that it could give her some sort of (sexual) pleasure. (After all, being caressed on my chest was not particularly stimulating nor pleasurable. Having my back or head caressed was great; chest, nothing.) The first time, when I was older (I was a late bloomer) that a girl let me touch her breasts (through her sweater, slip, and bra), I was really surprised when she seemed actually to enjoy it and get some pleasure out of it. It still did not occur to me though that she really did enjoy it, at least no more or no differently than she would have enjoyed me caressing her arm or hand. I thought perhaps she just liked it because she let me do it although she was not supposed to and because she did not get hit by lighting for letting me. Part of my gratification was that I did not get hit by lightning either.

Many people probably still do not always realize that one of the primary, if not the primary, point of caressing another person is to give that person pleasure, not to exact one's own pleasure. (Of course one might receive some psychological pleasure in giving someone else physical pleasure by stroking them, one might receive some sort of "conquest" ego pleasure sometimes, and one might caress someone into the mood to caress or make love to them in return and thereby receive pleasure, but the main purpose of the actual stroking at the time is to give the person who is being stroked pleasure from that stroking, whether it is pleasure as an end in itself or as a means to some more reciprocal or climactic state.) This seems obvious to me now; but many people seem to think that the point of touching is in its providing pleasure, or some sort of thrill, to the one touching, not the one being touched or caressed.

Some men will touch their present mates in the same way they got responses from their previous partners, and if the present partner does not find that particularly enjoyable, the man will not change but will say or think something like "nobody else ever complained"

or think their new partner frigid. Some women will not particularly enjoy being caressed at a certain time but allow it believing they are giving the guy they are with some kind of thrill just by letting him touch them. In some cases this may be true, but not in cases where the guy is trying to please or to stimulate them and not just "feel" them. Certainly during a first petting or love making time, or during such a session that is somehow illicit (adultery, sex in a public place while trying to keep from being discovered, etc.) there is an element of excitement based on adventure, danger, or illicitness. There is a thrill of being allowed to touch the other person, of participating in breaking a taboo, of success in getting to do what you want, of "getting to first base" with possibly the added anticipation of then being able to "score". But even in cases with this additional kind of psychological excitement, it seems to me one ought to keep in mind the main point of caressing is to give pleasure to the person one is touching.

Of course, some people take this overboard and take it as personal rejection, an insult, or a sign of their own inadequacy if their partner is not pleased or stimulated by their touch at some particular time, when in fact the other person may have other things on their mind or may simply not be in the mood. Oppositely such people take it, just as incorrectly, as a sign of personally great sexual prowess if the other person does respond and enjoy their touch.

There is to at least some extent a pleasure in being able to give pleasure to someone you want to arouse or to please; and there is a some feeling of pride in one's ability and sensitivity to be able to do that; and that is why overt responses like sighs, murmurs, closer hugs, writhing, etc. are very stimulating to some caressers. Again though, that feeling of pride in ability or accomplishment is not more important than being able to give the one you are caressing the pleasure in the first place.

I know of one woman who will stop scratching someone else's back the minute she does not feel like scratching it anymore, regardless of how much the other person is enjoying it or to what point of ecstasy the one being scratched is just about to reach with

only a little more scratching. She also stops scratching the second the scratchee directs her scratching to a particular spot they like or that itches. Her comment after stopping is "Who's doing this? You or me?" And the reply, "But who are you doing it for!" is met only by icy silence and an upturned head. She seems to take direction or requests as chastisement or complaint that she is incompetent, insensitive, or that you do not like her touch or technique.

The idea that the toucher is somehow the main recipient of pleasure is reminiscent of the Freudian spoof I mentioned in the free-will and responsibility section on ethics, the satirical contention being that since we obviously delighted in using our hands for so many things – applause, hand shaking, typing, thumb sucking, caressing ourselves as well as caressing others, Peter plugging the dike with his finger, etc. – that obviously we must do this for the pleasure our hands experience.

Of course, some people do not care about their partner's physical pleasure or emotional contentment, only their own. In the movie *Joe*, when Joe, an insensitive, macho, egotist, is about to have sex with an indiscriminately willing girl he has just met, he is ready for immediate intercourse. When she says "Wait a minute. What about foreplay?", his reply, without stopping, is "I don't need any foreplay." From what I have heard, though that is exaggerated, it is not totally untypical of the way some people behave in sex. If they do engage in some sort of foreplay, it is only the minimum necessary to induce their partner to intercourse, which is what they want.

Some women are just as guilty of this kind of idea, though, in reverse, as are some men. They have no idea that some men too like to be caressed before (and after) intercourse and that just "allowing" a man to caress them and have intercourse with them is not necessarily even just the physically complete (let alone emotionally complete) kind of experience the man is seeking. Just as there are the selfish, brutish Joe's of the world, there are the passionless, passive, lifeless, seemingly unresponsive, or only selfishly responsive, women. Unfortunately they do not always end up with

each other but instead sometimes end up with sensitive, caring people who deserve better.

Now some people are no help to the one caressing them or making love with them. They give someone interested in pleasing them no sign or guidance as to what they might like or even to what pleases them that the other person finds without guidance. Although here I have primarily been stressing giving the other person pleasure, there are also times in which it is not selfish to have them give you pleasure. One is when they are caressing you; it is not selfish to maneuver or help guide them so it is pleasurable to you. Since they are already seeking to give you pleasure, you would be doing them a favor by helping them succeed. This is whether you are both caressing each other at the time or whether you are simply having "your turn" being caressed. A second time is during intercourse itself (which, in part, is like simultaneous mutual caressing where caressing and being caressed are ideally the same thing); each person is "responsible" not only for the other person's pleasure but for his or her own pleasure as well, since if you do nothing to make it good for yourself, your partner will not very likely satisfy you on his or her own.

For those who need them, there are plenty of books about techniques for orgasm and mutually satisfying, even if not simultaneously climactic, sex. My point is not that of technique, but of purpose and perspective. Technique alone does not give pleasure, and lack of technical knowledge alone does not prevent giving it. In all caressing there is an element of exploration. The point to keep in mind is that in sex you are trying basically to physically and emotionally please your partner and to help them please you. Some of that may involve verbal communication, some may simply involve body language, body movement, and purrs of pleasure. Some may involve experimentation or trial and error, since one difficult situation is when one person wants the other to tell her or him what to do, but the other person wants the first to be creative on his or her own, so that telling would defeat the purpose. But whatever it

involves, the pleasure and satisfaction is the goal, not the technique. Technique is at best only a means to the satisfaction.

Further, in sexual matters as in all of ethics, simultaneous satisfaction may not always be possible. Sometimes turns will have to be taken to please each other, or some other continuing fair and equitable solution will need to be found. And, as in all of ethics, both partners' needs and wishes must be taken into account concerning sexual pleasure; and to be properly taken into account they need to be discovered or expressed.

Now there are a number of physical problems during or after intercourse that can make even it an unpleasant experience, assuming everything leading up to it has gone well enough. Insufficient lubrication, whether natural or artificial, can make penetration difficult, impossible, embarrassing, or painful. It can cause premature ejaculation, as can nervousness, excitement or who knows what. Premature ejaculation is one of those embarrassing and often unpleasant sexual experiences, particularly among the inexperienced. It can even happen without intercourse and while your clothes are still on. This can be particularly embarrassing to a guy. Some women also can have a kind of premature orgasm, a climax that happens much sooner than they want it to and that kills any further interest in sex at the time, though they did not have as long a pleasurable time as they had wanted before the orgasm. Such an orgasm may also not be as strong as one would have liked.

Orgasm, even at the "proper" time can be more a fizzle than an explosion or a climax. It can end interest in sex at the time without giving that final feeling of elation and satisfaction or completion. Or sometimes orgasm does not occur at all before one simply tires of trying to make it happen.

Bladder infections in women arise commonly enough in newly married couples that such cystitis is often referred to as "honeymoon" cystitis, but most couples are not aware of the disease until the woman has it diagnosed. One gynecologist says he keeps

the names and phone numbers of gynecologists in Nassau and Hawaii on his night table for panic-stricken long- distance late night calls from his honeymooning patients. Symptoms generally include a very frequent desire to urinate (even after having just done so) and a burning sensation from urinating, "two conditions", as he puts it, "which are hardly conducive to a happy honeymoon or harmonious sex." I know of one very sheltered and virginal bride who came down with it early in her honeymoon and was absolutely sure she was being punished for having sex even though she was now married.

This gynecologist also thought that in many cases a honeymoon put an unnecessary artificial extra strain on many couples' sex life – particularly after an emotionally and physically exhausting wedding and trip to the honeymoon spot. Even without such travel though he felt the wedding night was often a difficult time for many couples. He thought it was better to postpone a trip till a later time.

Almost everyone I have ever talked to about it has had some sexual experience, no matter how minor, that was frightening, frustrating, or embarrassing to them at the time, though they may often now look back on it with humor. The point is that the physical aspect of loving is simply not always that easy or smooth or pleasantly satisfying, and many a relationship might easily flounder with a bad experience that neither partner might really understand. Knowing this might help prevent bad sex from ruining the relationship completely or at least might make one not feel somehow used or wronged if the relationship does go sour after sex. A relationship might end after sex because one of the partners was selfish and dishonest, simply dishonestly using and discarding the other. But it can also end after the sex if one or both experienced the sex as unpleasant or embarrassing, frustrating, or demeaning, particularly if they do not know why and are too ashamed, afraid, or naive to talk about it with each other.

Key Takeaways

- Sex can have, and generally does have, extremely strong influence on emotions – not only the desire for it prior to having it, but the feelings that can flood in afterward, not all of which are always good. Moreover many of the feelings before or after sex are not permanent and it can be a mistake to act on them in ways that cannot be 'taken back' or remedied once you have so acted. It is important to understand many of the different possibilities.

Key Terms

- ***Emotional sexual incompatibility*** are cases where, say, one person wants tender caresses and the other person is not capable of tenderness in touch; or one likes to kiss hard, and the other gently; one likes to hug and cuddle and the other doesn't; one might like to have an important conversation along with touching and making love and is intellectually stimulated by the physical closeness, whereas the other does not like to talk during and just wants to roll over and quietly go to sleep afterward; or where afterward one is very accepting of however it was and the other wants to do a running commentary, or give a verbal critique or grade.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: Can sex change a relationship? Drastically? If it can change it or change it drastically, how so or why?
- ***Question***: What makes sex be right or wrong?

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Chapter 33 Problems of the Inexperienced

Chapter 33 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Distinguish feelings from each other – particularly feelings which have subtle or complex but nuanced differences, and the appropriate ways to respond to them, tend to become easier with experience and proper understanding of one's past mistakes or and with reflections about how one wish one had handled the situation afterward.

Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn about dealing with relationship insecurity.

Having just recounted some of the problems that an inexperienced or unknowledgeable person might encounter regarding the physical or technical aspects of sex, I would now like to point out some other problems that seem to arise fairly commonly for inexperienced people, problems more of an emotional or social nature, some of which have a relationship to sex but others which do not.

(Let me first explain that "inexperienced" is not really quite the right word; "naive" or "unaware" is perhaps more accurate though each of these terms has a somewhat derogatory connotation I do not mean to imply. The reason "inexperienced" is inappropriate is that some people can be very understanding, aware, and knowledgeable with little experience, and some people gain little knowledge or wisdom no matter how much experience they have. The latter learn little from their experience. Age also seems to have little to do with this; many older people are inexperienced or unaware of these things. Some people have little knowledge about how to act concerning dating and friendship with the opposite sex, though they may have been married for years before becoming

widowed or divorced. This may be particularly true for people who married the first person, or one of the first persons, they ever dated or loved; and even more particularly if their spouse then served as the only person of the opposite sex they allowed themselves to have any sort of friendship with.)

The following are in no particular order of significance:

1) A rather simple problem to solve, but one which unsolved causes difficulty, is the problem of how to refuse a particular date with a person you would like to go out with, but whose particular invitation at that time you cannot accept or would prefer not to. To turn down the invitation without appearing to reject them, first tell them you appreciate their asking (if you want to flatter them, tell them you are flattered they asked you) and that you would like to get to know them and to go out with them, but that you cannot go with them at that particular time or to that particular event. Suggest an alternative time and event if you can think of one for you to attend together, maybe even your treat. If you cannot think of such an alternative at the time, ask them later. This is particularly flattering and shows you really are sincere in wanting to see them though you will not be able to at the time or event they proposed. The occasion does not have to be something expensive or monumental. Often you can suggest going for a walk or for coffee or ice cream or meeting at the museum. The point is to show some interest in being with them and in getting to know them – the place or event you invite them to should facilitate your getting acquainted, or at least not hinder it. Extend a dinner invitation if you like. If they ask you out at a time you are free but for an event you would rather not attend (such as a movie you have already seen or a restaurant you used to frequent with an "ex", that would stir memories you would rather forget) then simply suggest an alternative event, or simply ask them if they might not mind a different event (movie, restaurant, whatever). Or, if their heart was really set on that particular event, decline but issue your own invitation for some other event some other time. This seems to me a very natural and much less awkward way to communicate than to

announce simply that you cannot go out because you already have plans. If you say the latter, they do not know whether to pursue asking you out some other time or not. More timid callers might not call back a second time, or the second time might be just as inconvenient, and only the most determined person would call after that.

2) Politely turning down a date with someone you do not want to go out with is probably a little more difficult, since it is not usually pleasant to hurt someone else's feelings; and in some cases it is not prudent to anger someone who might be easily offended. In refusing an invitation, it is important to thank the person for asking at least. Sometimes an explanation for the refusal may be in order to help take some of the sting out of it, particularly if the refusal is based on something other than the personal qualities of the person asking you out. For example, you may have a friend away at college who is the only person you date. But if the reason would be offensive, or if you do not want to risk getting into a debate about why you should go out with them, sometimes it is simply better to give no explanation for your refusal. You simply say you are grateful they asked but you cannot or would rather not go out with them, and if they are then impolite enough to ask why not, you simply say you would rather not say. In some cases you may want to lie and say you cannot go out at that time, but that invites the possibility of being asked out again, and then it is perhaps even more difficult to say you would simply rather not.

I have been speaking here of turning down a polite request for a date. But some requests are impolite or are made impolitely; and there are any number of ways of turning those down – from a polite, unexcited "No thank you" as if you were simply refusing a piece of candy, to whatever you can think of at the time. On one television show, when a fat, self-centered, middle- aged man asked a gorgeous secretary to go out with him, saying his wife let him fool around a little on the side, the secretary just cooed to him, "But I wouldn't want to share you; I would want all of you, if we started going out

together," which obviously was not what the fellow had in mind. "Sorry," she said as she turned her back and sashayed away. On "Cheers" one night, when Carla asked Sam why he never asked her out though he was always "hitting on" anything else in skirts, he said "I just always thought you would be too much woman for me, Carla." She thought that made sense.

3) It is easy to mistake another person's genuine (humanitarian) concern for you for their being in love with you; and you might respond inappropriately. Romantic love often involves concern for the loved one's well-being, but such concern does not always entail romantic love. There are many kind people who care about the well-being of others without having romantic or any other particular attraction for them. This may be particularly true of some sympathetic teachers, counselors, doctors, nurses, attorneys, police, paramedics or others who you meet while you are facing some particular problem. Also, people who have gone through certain bad experiences themselves often like to help others weather them more readily than they themselves did facing them alone. Not everyone who cares about you is in love with you. Not everyone who shows a concerned interest in your needs you to be attracted to them in return,nor embarrassingly avoided if you are not attracted to them.

4) Even if another person does love you, that does not mean you have to develop romantic feelings toward them, or shun them or feel embarrassed or guilty if you do not. Not all love is reciprocal, and there is no particular reason it should be. Sometimes it is painful for one with a crush, infatuation, attraction, or loving feelings not to have them returned; and sometimes it is difficult to understand how such feelings, being felt so passionately and intensely by one, cannot be perceived or returned by the other. But sometimes it is sufficient for one simply to have and to express such feelings for another without demanding they be returned. If they are returned, that is icing on the cake. One should not ever feel pressured to return love; love is not the kind of thing that can properly be demanded. Feelings of attraction cannot necessarily be conjured up on

command. One may or may not hope that one's love or one's romantic attraction will be returned;but ethically one cannot demand that it will be. And psychologically, such demands may most likely be self-defeating anyway, unless the subject or object of such demands has some consuming desire to be possessed or enslaved by someone else.

5) Inexperienced people often mistake other sorts of feelings or attractions toward someone for feelings of romance toward that person. This is particularly easy to have happen to you when it is the first time any feelings of attraction toward another have been awakened in you. It is also easy if such feelings are awakened so infrequently that you cannot distinguish them very easily.

Now although it may be impossible to know why you are attracted to a particular person, I think it is important to know how, or in what way, you are attracted to them. It is important because it can help prevent hurt feelings, damaged egos, or worse in some cases, and because it often helps simply to prevent misunderstandings. For example, take the case of a college or high school counselor or a teacher who is very concerned about the well- being of his or her students, and who pays special attention at some point to a particular student who seems to be having some sort of problems that are affecting his or her work. Such concern may spark a feeling of gratitude in the student, and that coupled with perhaps some sort of feelings of respect or awe for the teacher or counselor's demonstrated abilities, maturity, etc., may lead the student to feel he or she (romantically) loves the counselor or teacher; or the special attention may lead the student to believe the teacher or counselor has some special attraction for him or her.

Now if the student mistakes the teacher's concern for attraction or mistakes his or her own gratitude for attraction, he or she may get into a situation, which, unless the teacher or counselor is perceptive enough to recognize and capable enough to deal with sympathetically, could lead to real problems. The student might act in ways that could lead to embarrassment for the student and

the teacher. Or they might have an affair, which if based only on gratitude and awe on the one side, and on sexual attraction on the other side (or on temporary emotional needs or feelings of both), is more likely than not doomed to failure and disaster.

This is not to argue that affairs between (college) students and teachers are always or usually doomed to fail disastrously or that they are always wrong. There are many very mature students, and in a small class in daily contact with a sharp teacher, the two are certainly bound to notice each others' better qualities. Many successful and happy marriages have grown out of student-teacher romances (or out of romances between teachers and their former students, in cases where they, perhaps prudently, waited until after the course was over to date). But whether they wait until after the course is over to date or not, the basic problem is still the same (though at least waiting until after a course is over eliminates the course grade from being a potential source of problems) – the problem of their relationship being a satisfactory or successful one if it is based on temporary needs or feelings, or on feelings that are mistaken for more appropriate ones to base such a relationship on. Relationships based on mistaken ideas about what each others' actions mean or imply, or about what each others' intentions or feelings or desires are, or about what the relationship means to both of you, are relationships that are especially fragile. And this is even more so when the conditions that occasion such feelings or desires are probably temporary. Romances that arise in somewhat traumatic circumstances, like at college before exams or in war before hazardous duty, have a particular vulnerability when those traumatic circumstances end. Any relationship may change or sustain damage when surrounding circumstances change for one or both partners; and the more dramatic the change in surrounding circumstances, the more likely the change in the relationship. Experience can help you understand though (1) which circumstances are ones that induce temporary feelings of attraction in you and others, and (2) what sorts of actions and responses are more appropriate and more likely to be in line with which sorts of

feelings. Experience can help you learn what sorts of feelings you have, and how to distinguish them from each other.

And it can teach you to recognize all this in others to some extent as well. And it is my belief that one should also look out for the other person in a relationship as well as for oneself. One must help an inexperienced person deal with an infatuation or crush or with an unwarranted or potentially damaging sexual or other kind of attraction if one can. One should not just dismiss it or take unfair advantage of it or ignore it if there is some better way to deal with it to help the other person understand himself or herself better. Such concern and help, when it is possible and successful, also helps make for much more rewarding and long-lasting relationships (including friendships) generally too.

The kind of mistaken notions of affection or attraction I am writing about here do not always have to be between an older and younger person. When I was in high school and was very shy and socially insecure, if a girl so much as said hello to me and introduced herself, I was easily flattered and smitten. In our still often double standard society, I still frequently have a flattered tingle of excitement when a female takes the initiative and introduces herself to me in a kind and polite manner, since that alone seems to be a sign of her being interested in me.

And when I was in college there was a reversal of this sort of thing. At the time that I went to school many people had the idea that a guy should try to "snow" a girl; that is, really impress her in some way, dazzle her, or sweep her off her feet so that she would make out with him or sleep with him. But I generally wanted to get to know a girl, not snow her. I wanted us to like each other, if we were going to, for what we were, not for what we pretended to be. Unfortunately, with all the other fellows running around trying to be dazzling, but instead being only transparently superficial, my attempts to carry on an actually meaningful conversation, was so impressive to many girls that it ended up doing the snow job I was trying to avoid. That was sometimes frightening and disappointing

when I was not feeling so impressive or was not ready for them to have a crush on me and did not know how to cope with it. This was all the more compounded when I felt lonely and deep down really wanted to be liked for any reason. Then I was not sure whether I was "using" sincerity as a trick or whether I really was sincere, or what.

And kindness or concern are not the only qualities that people of any age might find attracting. As in the teacher-student case, it may be some sort of intellectual attraction or intellectually satisfying stimulation that creates the bond. It may be some sort of physical beauty, or type of personality, or the way someone treats children or other adults, or any of a whole range of possibilities. In the movie *The Electric Horseman*, part of the appeal about Sonny was his concern for the ill-treated horse. I have seen divorced women uninterested in dating anyone become absolutely smitten over men they had not previously met who were nice to their children on the playground. Non-physical good traits tend to make their owners particularly appealing when others around them do not have them. A cheerful, industrious person may be attracting when otherwise surrounded by sluggish malcontents; a conscientious person among those generally irresponsible; someone sensitive in the midst of brutes or egotists. Pablo Casals is said to have spent most of his time around businessmen because he said they wanted to talk with him about music – his love – whereas musicians only wanted to talk about money.

6) Part of the reason it is easy to mistake any sort of attraction for all sorts of attraction or for love or romantic attraction is that our society still seems to stress the false notion that there is one and only one "right" person for each of us, one person that is made for us and we for them.

"Somewhere there waiteth in this world of ours For one lone soul another lonely soul, Each choosing each through all the weary hours, And meeting strangely at one sudden goal, Then blend they, like green leaves with golden flowers, Into one beautiful and perfect

whole; And life's long night is ended, and the way Lies open onward to eternal day." – Edwin Arnold (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 464)

If this were true, it would be amazing that we would ever meet the "right" person, let alone meet them in the high school or college or church we attend or the neighborhood where we were reared or that they would be the child of one of our parents' friends.

The old saying to a jilted lover that there are plenty of other fish in the sea, though somewhat of a cold way to put it, contains some wisdom. There are probably any number of people whom we could love and be loved by and live with happily. Further there are even many more people whom we could be attracted to in any number of ways, including romantically. Yet until one realizes this is true, generally by having met such people and having had many and different attractions, it is hard to believe that your first (or most recent) attraction (of whatever sort) is not necessarily "the real thing," "real love". Hence, any attraction may seem to be feelings of love. To the inexperienced person looking for some one and only one special person, the first person who is special to them in any way will appear to be the "one and only". Until you find there are many people you can enjoy and who are good for you, it is often hard to believe that this first (or most recent) person who is kind to you or good for you or who makes you happy is not the only one who can do so. To a young or inexperienced person or to a lonely person, any kindness may seem monumental and be viewed out of all proportions. Likewise to a recently divorced person who was not treated very well by their spouse. But there are many who are kind and many who are a joy; and it is not fair to you or to others to think that anyone who shows concern or causes joy therefore gives or requires love, and that no one else deserves any of your attention.

Now unfortunately, though there are many kind and understanding people, at this point in history there are probably many more who are not. Hence, the good ones really do stand out. When I was an academic counselor for freshman and sophomore college students, there were some kids who needed extra time or extra concern in developing their programs, either from the

beginning or once they had run into problems that should have been prevented from the beginning. Invariably after some of us spent the required time and effort to get everything straightened out, we would be thanked by appreciative students who then usually remarked that the other counselors they had seen had not taken the interest in them. We were always gratified they were appreciative of our efforts (even though it was our job), but we were simultaneously disappointed that not all the other counselors took similar pains with those students as they should have. We liked to be appreciated and perceived in a good way, but not because we were just doing what we were supposed to be doing while some of the other counselors were not.

And I know how impressive good treatment and obvious concern can be to a young person (or anyone) accustomed to bad or indifferent treatment. When I was a freshman in high school, one day I felt weak and ill while in algebra class, but I did not want to interrupt class to find out what I was supposed to do to be able to leave school or call home. I continued to listen to the teacher, but I had put my head down on my arm on the desk. Pretty soon the teacher stopped talking and came over to me. I was certain he was going to think I was bored and acting rudely, and that he would have some lecturing comments. Instead he just gently put his hand on my arm and asked softly whether I was all right. When I said I did not feel very well, he told me to go to the school office and who to see. Very few teachers would have behaved that way; I was very grateful. Later that year when I scored highest from our school on the algebra portion of the state standardized exams, I was more pleased that I had done it for him, than I was for myself. Previously some of the other algebra teachers had been given more recognition; he deserved more on the basis of both his excellent teaching ability and his concern for his students. I was glad to see my accomplishment helped provide it for him.

It is wonderful there are such people, yet it is a shame they stand out so toweringly just because so many others are simply not so

kind, concerned, or aware. Still, there are plenty of good people; one can find them if only one has the patience and perseverance to keep looking. They are not so rare that one has to fall in love with the first person who meaningfully treats them well.

And the more friends and loves or crushes one has, the more one sees how much joy and affection there can be from, and toward, others; and the less likely one is to mistake one sort of attraction for another or to expect or demand more from a relationship than it is likely to be able to give. And the less one is likely to be hurt when one finds out some particular relationship cannot be as full or as perfect or as all- encompassing as one might have hoped it would be.

One can accept that relationship for what it is worth, not reject it for what it cannot be. And one can know there can be other good, perhaps better, fuller, or richer relationships. There can at least be plenty of good ones, even if it is hard to find some of the great ones, or some one "perfect" one.

7) There is a kind of case that seems to arise frequently enough so as not to be unusual, in which a sexual experience is almost doomed to be dissatisfying from the start. This is the kind of case where someone decides to try kissing or petting or intercourse, or whatever, either for the first time or with some particular (type of) person for the first time, not because they are passionately aroused or sexually attracted to that person, but only because they want to see what the experience is like. Good sex, though, generally is not the kind of thing one can have while one is trying to be a detached observer, so to speak outside of one's skin. If you have sex just to see what it is like, it generally will not be very good. Generally some sort of passion or at least even some non- specific or undirected sexual arousal (e.g., horniness) is required for the experience to be a good or great one. It is difficult, if not impossible, to experience the joy of sex, if instead of being involved in the experience, one is sitting back waiting for the joy to happen. It is not unlike trying to pay attention to a speaker by concentrating on paying attention to him, rather than by simply listening to him and perhaps thinking

about what he is saying. It is almost impossible to pay attention to someone's words when you are thinking about paying attention. Or it is something like trying to see if you can forget about a certain pain by thinking about other things, when you keep checking to see if you have been successful. As long as you keep checking, you will still be thinking about the pain and still be aware of it then.

I am not saying sex cannot be good while at the same time you realize that it is good. And I am not saying that one cannot experiment with new techniques, fantasies, or partners and have it turn out well. I am only saying it cannot be very good, or generally will not be very good, if instead of getting involved and feeling passionate at the time, one is only an unimpassioned observer. Good sex generally requires some sort of passion, or state of arousal at some point; good sex is generally not, if ever, just the result of certain physical acts or manipulations.

One girl I know had been dating two fellows and had been having a certain amount of sexual activity with both, but was still a virgin. She finally simply decided one day that she was not going to be a virgin any longer, and rationally decided which of the two fellows she was going to have intercourse with. She went to see him with the intent of having intercourse, and while with him she realized it just was not going to be any good that way. She decided against it. She waited till she was in a less clinical and more passionate mood to have intercourse; and when that time came, it turned out to be with the other guy.

Many people lose their virginity just to see what intercourse is like; and when doing it for that reason, it generally is not very good. Likewise many divorced people, particularly those who did not date very much or have much sexual activity before they were married, tend to sleep with someone they have no particular interest in, just to see what it is like to sleep with someone other than their former spouse. It then is usually not a very rewarding experience.

And this is true of other kinds of sexual experiences as well. One girl at college overheard some of her girlfriends talking about

masturbating and how great it was. She had never known about it before and had never had the desire to touch herself arise naturally. So she decided to try it; she showered, put on some nice perfume, put on some soft music in her room, lit some candles, laid down on her bed and began to caress herself. It was futile. To anyone who knew about such things, it would have been a good bet it would be futile. There is a difference between arousing yourself sexually when you are interested in doing so and trying to see whether or not you can arouse yourself sexually when you are not in the mood but only acting as a "scientist" doing "research".

There would be fewer damaged egos and less self-doubt about one's ability to experience the joys of sex if people only realized ahead of time that trying sex to see what it is like, without having any real passionate interest in it at the time, is almost predictably courting an unfulfilling and dissatisfying experience. Sexual enjoyment, like any other pleasure or happiness, is not generally an end that can be successfully sought just by itself; it is the side effect of fulfilling or trying to fulfill some particular desire; without the desire or passion first, the pleasure will usually also not appear.

Now one may (and one should) decide rationally that sex of a certain sort or with a certain person would be all right. The point though is not to participate then just because one has made that determination, but to use that moral determination as an umbrella to cover the time when enough passion arises that one **wants** to have sex of that sort or with that person. Then there is at least a better chance it will be satisfying.

8) There is a difference between sexual flirting and non-sexual flirting. Some people like to flirt but without intending anything of an actual sexual nature by it. Sometimes such flirting simply indicates a certain amount of benevolent, good-natured, and flattering (potential) interest but with no intention to try to pursue that interest (often for a good reason, like being married to someone else), just the intention to make it known. Sometimes flirts are just teases, trying to make others squirm or get aroused with no chance

of satisfaction. Sometimes flirting is just fun, a kind of intellectual activity with a bit of harmless passion guiding it and motivating it. When two such flirts get together and flirt with each other, it can be a lot of mutual harmless fun. But the point is to know when someone is flirting sexually and when they are flirting non-sexually (and to know whether they are being malicious like a tease, or simply being very genuine and friendly). Sometimes you can tell by the manner of the flirting, or where it is done (in front of others – those in front of whom it would not be done if it were meant sexually), but often you can tell only by knowing the character or values of the person doing the flirting. For example, you might know a particular person would never even think about having an extra-marital affair, or would never really seriously consider pre-marital sex (with you), so if you see them flirting (with you) the chances are pretty good they mean it non-sexually. Sometimes two people can tell it is non-sexual because they keep flirting with each other without either one making any sort of move to go further, even under conducive circumstances and even when the flirting has opened up a perfect and obvious next step if either of them actually wanted to take it. Sometimes there is just simply a gleam in the eye or a gleeful playfulness of a sort that is very difficult to describe, that lets you each know you are just having fun or maybe even a harmless fantasy about (intimately enjoying) each other and simply meaning it as an unspoken compliment, gesture of appreciation, or kind playfulness.

Of course, there is a fairly thin line between sexual and non-sexual flirting, and it can always be stepped over. But there is a difference between the two, and one should realize at least that not all flirting is an invitation to a sexual liaison. And as long as non-sexual flirting stays non- sexual, then, when it is not malicious, it can be a delightful, harmless, emotionally and psychologically stimulating, and often gratifying, interplay between two people.

9) Trust plays a large part in the confidence of many inexperienced people to do or try things without self-consciousness or embarrassment. As one gains in experience or

maturity, one tends to learn there are fewer things one needs to be embarrassed about, since few people expect anyone to be perfect or even good at everything or to always look good in every situation. Surely there will still sometimes be embarrassments and surely people will not feel secure around those they actually and reasonably distrust; but they will feel more secure around strangers and feel less unwarranted embarrassment. The sayings that "no one can make a fool out of you without your consent" and "you are the only one that can make a fool out of you" seem to have more meaning as you grow in experience, maturity, and confidence.

You learn that unforeseeable and unpreventable mistakes are not anything to be ashamed of and that anyone can make them. Some children, adolescents, and adults hate to be different, even when there is no good reason or possibility to conform; but one can outgrow this by finding those areas in which one is good and in which others may not be quite so adept. Or by realizing that irrational, and often stupid, opinions about things are not more important just because they are someone else's or because they are currently popular.

I grew up with naturally curly hair in a family that did not have naturally curly hair and at a time when no one wanted to have curly hair. My parents and others tried to get my hair to be straight by brushing it and I was told that if it did not stay straight and in place, and without being frizzy, it was because I was lazy and not combing or brushing it enough. I believed all that, and my hair was a constant source of embarrassment until one day I decided I would simply wear it curly instead of futilely trying to make it go straight. Shortly after that, curly hair became fashionable, and I now get a bittersweet chuckle out of how envious people are of my hair and how much money they spend trying to get theirs to look the way mine does naturally.

Other people may be shy about other physical characteristics or be hesitant to try out new things because they fear they will look silly or be laughed at or thought incompetent. Being around

someone they trust is then important for them to be willing to try and to succeed. This becomes less important as one gains in experience and confidence. One can easily see that in sexual matters as well, it can be important then for one who is inexperienced to have a partner one feels comfortable with and who one feels will not think them a fool for perhaps not knowing very much. Likewise romantic and other social matters as well. This need for a specific feeling of trust, however, I think tends to disappear as one gains knowledge and confidence and as one learns that mistakes and ignorance in a given area are hardly earth-shattering flaws or signs of irremediable character flaws. One begins not so much to actively trust more people but to be indifferent to ignorant opinions and to actively distrust fewer people without their first giving you a reason to feel them untrustworthy or unkind. One becomes more comfortable with oneself and with others who give you no specific reason to be suspicious of them.

(I actually think that ***justified self-confidence*** and at least some indifference to ignorant prejudice can make people be more attractive to others. Photographers see all kinds of attractive people who feel themselves unattractive, and who, without the proper encouragement by the photographer, would actually look unattractive in their portraits, instead of showing up as attractive as the photographer sees they can be. In the sixties, when movie heroines began to look like plain Janes instead of glamorous stars, when the heroine would first appear on screen I used to think I would not like the movie because it starred some ordinary or ugly person. But if the actress was good, by the end of the film I would not only think she was beautiful, but would go out and for the first time be enchanted with other girls who looked like that.

If you look at photographs of stars from the past, often there is nothing that would indicate they would have any particular appeal to anyone, even though you might know they were the rage to emulate in their time. If you can see a newsreel or film of them, you see their appeal comes from their presence and magnetic

personality and that somehow that appeal is transferred to their appearance. Except for people who already look like other admired people, I suspect most people's appearance and glamorous physical attractiveness depends more on their confidence and character and presentation than on their actual physical characteristics. Photographers are well aware that even the most striking and stunning people often have self- doubts about their appearance or find themselves unattractive. It is the people, even otherwise average looking people, who can rise above that self- doubt, I suspect, and be comfortable with themselves who will be the people who others find attractive and try to emulate.)

Key Takeaways

- Being inexperienced will lead to normal mistakes, but not all mistakes can be prevented and one needs to learn from mistakes, not consider them indelible character flaws that render one worthless or signify one is.
- Relationships based on mistaken ideas about what each others' actions mean or imply, or about what each others' intentions or feelings or desires are, or about what the relationship means to both of you, are relationships that are especially fragile

Key Terms

- ***Justified self-confidence*** and, some indifference to ignorant prejudice, can make people be more attractive to others.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What is important to note about sexual flirting and non-sexual flirting?
- ***Question***: What should be remembered about unforeseeable mistakes?

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Chapter 34 On Being Used

Chapter 34 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Give example(s) of the various circumstances and attitudes or feelings about sex that would constitute using someone, or being used, sexually, and being able to distinguish them from circumstances which only mistakenly appear to be a case of one person's using the other.

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Watch this video or scan the QR code to see how you can stop being used.

Since sex between two people is usually a matter of mutual and mutually voluntary interaction, I would like to comment on the notion of one of the two partner's being "used" or taken advantage of sexually. (I am speaking here only about sex that does not result in pregnancy; I will discuss sex involving pregnancy or reasonably possible pregnancy at the end of this chapter.) It at first seemed curious to me that girls or women usually seemed to be the ones who felt used or who accused boys or men of "using" them; curious, since they were involved in the same activity at the same time –a somewhat reciprocal activity that seems not to make one person a "user" and one a "used" subject.

I think there are a number of circumstances and/or conditions that would be appropriately considered as ones in which one party is used by the other. But in these cases it will also be quite possible for the male to be the one who is "used" by the female, and not necessarily the one who is doing the "using".

1) I think that whenever one person has sex (whether kissing, petting, intercourse, whatever), intending it to be a part of a larger

or fuller relationship and/or as part of a mutually affectionate, emotional relationship, and the other person knows this, but has no similar intention or feeling, and does not inform the first person about the one-sidedness or cross-purposes of the relationship, and instead has sex just out of a physical desire, ego need, or conquest mentality, then the person with the broader expectation has been taken advantage of or used.

This does not pertain to honest attempts by both parties to have sex as part of a larger relationship but having it (or having some insights, comment, or occurrence during it) instead ruin the relationship; nor does it pertain to such honest attempts where the relationship simply deteriorates after the sex for whatever non-sexual cause or reason. A relationship that dissolves in such a way or at such a time may make it appear to one person that they were cared about only for sex, when, in fact, that was not the case.

This also does not apply to sexual relationships where both people are seeking only a good sexual time as they enter into it. Under such mutual feelings, one could hardly be considered as being used by the other person (any more than they are using that person).

Nor does it involve honest misunderstanding where one person has made it clear to the other person that sex was not part of some deeper involvement and honestly thought the other person understood that, though the other person did not. There are cases of self-deception or naiveté, or lack of self-knowledge, where one party mistakenly believes they can have sex with another with no desire or need on their own part for a larger or fuller relationship. So I think there is some responsibility on the part of the one who is interested primarily in the sexual aspect of a relationship and who makes that interest clear to another not just to accept that other person's word that they accept that or feel that way too, but also to judge from the other person's behavior and demeanor whether that word is accurate.

2) I think it would be appropriate for one person to feel used if the other person achieved sexual satisfaction or enjoyment and

made no honest attempt to reciprocate so that both would have enjoyment or satisfaction. And just "letting" someone have sex with you is not what I mean by reciprocating, unless, of course, that is enjoyment enough for them.

I am not talking here of cases where one person does not end up satisfying the other though the attempt was made, but of cases where one does not try to give the other person satisfaction or enjoyment and/or where he or she does not care whether the other person is satisfied or finds enjoyment or not. Environment, outside pressures, fear, other things on one's mind, or either partner's naiveté, ineptness, or lack of ability may cause one person not to enjoy sex very much while the other person does; but lack of success at helping the other person really enjoy sex at a particular time does not indicate lack of concern about trying to help them do so; and it is the lack of concern that is the hallmark of using someone in this kind of case.

Now, quite often, though not always, it is men who can more easily and quickly attain orgasm, sometimes leaving their partners unsatisfied and used, or at least feeling used. But there are cases where the reverse is also true. Further, orgasm is not the only kind of sexual satisfaction, and just attaining it, or allowing your mate to attain, orgasm is not necessarily to have or "give" even physically satisfying, let alone emotionally satisfying sex. Sometimes the amount and kind of foreplay and afterplay, and the kind of conversation, are as important as, or even more important than, whether orgasm is achieved.

3) A person can be considered to be (letting himself or herself be) used (and also to be using the other person, though in a different way) if he or she has sex with no desire for it but instead is doing it in order to get something else —money, status, job promotion, state secrets, a favor in return, marriage, the other person's love, or whatever.

4) Under some circumstances, seduction or talking someone into sex or plying them with wine or drugs or maybe even just soft music and candlelight to take advantage of a temporary mood is to use

someone. Similarly, taking advantage of such a mood even though one has not induced it oneself, but finds another person already in it –perhaps depressed, despondent, lonely, rejected by a lover, etc.– a mood that either is temporary or that can be somehow dulled or offset or temporarily satisfied by sex, but sex which will probably be regretted by the "victim" later, is to use or take advantage of someone else. I am talking about cases where sex is not a real solution but only a (temporary) masking of the problem. To be a situation of use, in this case the user must intentionally and knowingly be taking such advantage of such a situation. Having sex with someone who thinks he or she wants sex, but who really only wants companionship, when you have no reason to believe sex is not what they really want, is not to use them.

Also, there may be some cases in which sex works out for both parties even though something else might have worked out equally well. For example, two people can both be lonely and spend a night together that might work out well and memorably for both of them. I do not consider this a case of use, even of reciprocal or mutual use. (If this is use, all cases of relationship sex would probably be ones of use or mutual use. But what I am trying to examine here are cases of sex where one person feels used but does not seem to have used the other person.) Further, since sexual time spent together is not always just physical mechanics of sex, but often includes conversation, displays of tenderness, sometimes flashes of insight, humor, wit, reflections on the relationship or life in general, etc., sexual time spent with another may be important for many reasons other than just whatever physical or sensual pleasure that may be sought or that may occur. When this happens, taking advantage of a temporary mood is not always to "use" someone; it depends on what occurs when that advantage is taken, and what the experience might (ultimately) mean to the person in the temporary mood.

5) In marriage or some other long term, or committed, relationship, there will be times when one person is in a sexual mood, but the other is not. At such times, the second person may either be very

opposed to having sex, or they may not be opposed, just simply not already particularly in the mood. In the latter case they may be willing to have sex as a favor for a loved one. It seems to me that the person who is in the mood should then try to help the other person also be in the mood so that there is some mutual joy and not just acquiescence. It is all right to have sex to let your partner enjoy it, but it is simply better if both can more enthusiastically participate, rather than one's simply doing the other a favor. Doing someone else a sexual "favor" when one is not in the mood and does not particularly get into the mood, even someone you love very much, may lead to some resentment and a later feeling of having been used and of having "let oneself be used". And contrary to popular belief, this applies to men as well as to women. A man might be willing to accommodate his partner sexually in a number of ways, and can even have intercourse without really being all that interested at the time.

None of these cases is gender specific; either the user or the one being used could be male or female. In a society in which men may be more sexually aggressive, assertive, or interested, and where women may deny, repress, or never have been encouraged to be aware of their own sexuality, it may be that men would more often use women than women would use men. But in a society where there is not inequality of assertiveness, sexual use might be more on an equal basis. It is not difficult to find cases of either sex using the other in any of the five categories described above. The numbers may simply be different for men and for women, but there is nothing about sexually using someone that makes it only possible for, or characteristic of, men.

There are two or three things, however, to discuss because I think they contribute to what I think are mistaken views about what constitutes using someone sexually and why it is men rather than women who seem to be the perpetrators.

1) Although the phrases***"making love" and "having sexual intercourse"*** are intransitive or at least reciprocal verbs describing a reciprocal or mutual activity, the common verbs "screw" and "fuck"

are transitive verbs requiring both a subject and an object; and in the normal heterosexual use of the word, the subject is male; the object female. In the heterosexual use of these words, we generally talk about men screwing women, not women screwing men (though there are times where the woman is very aroused or much more aggressive than the man, and she will use the terms in reverse, often to emphasize the strength of her desire or the fact that she wants to be the more "active" partner in certain ways). It is as if two people were not doing the same thing together, but one was acting on, or using, the other. If we spoke or thought more in terms of "having sex", "having intercourse", "making love", there would perhaps not be such a mindset about subject and object. Women can be said to "have sex", "have intercourse", and "make love" with men just as readily as men can be said to do those things with women.

1a) (Numbered this way because I think there is a close correlation here with 1.) Accompanying this, is the language used that talks about penetration or insertion of the penis into the vagina during sex. There is somehow the image that the penis is "invading" or being "put into" the vagina. This may be true to an extent for certain logistical reasons, particularly if the woman takes a relatively passive role. But it is equally true (though you almost never hear it stated this way) that the vagina is surrounding and engulfing, even taking in, absorbing, or "swallowing up", the penis. This way of describing the act would make it sound more like the woman is the one performing the act or taking the more active part, or somehow getting more out of the activity. When women do play a more active role in initiating or performing sexual intercourse, perhaps such language actually is a more appropriate description of the act. Since language sometimes affects perspectives, language of this sort might make women feel more in control or in a more active capacity, and it even might make men begin to feel they are the objects of intercourse and that they are the ones being used, particularly in cases where the sex is not particularly satisfying either physically or emotionally or when a relationship deteriorates

after sex. The language of sex may not only be reflective of how it is perceived, but a factor in how it is perceived, and performed.

This is not always, of course. There seem to be some women (as some men) who have a dislike of sex, and these women could not see themselves as being the manipulators of men during sex, or in order to have sex, no matter what language was used. But there are many women who actively enjoy sex or who would like to, and who are perhaps often subconsciously influenced by language such as in 1 or 1a that makes them feel when sex or relationships have gone bad that they were the ones who were manipulated, instead of having participated in a potentially mutually active, mutually satisfying, and equally pleasurable activity.

2) Perhaps for accidental cultural reasons, but possibly for more deeply natural psychological or physiological reasons, many women do seem to take a more passive part in sex. They like to be stroked or touched and massaged but do not do much of that in return. Their idea of initiating petting or kissing is to assume a posture that obviously allows or invites the man to touch them, rather than maintaining a "defensive", "closed", or ambiguous posture. Some women do not want to take a more active role; some simply do not think they need to or that the male would not enjoy being the "object" of touching –that the thrill for the man is somehow his touching the woman, not the woman's touching him. At any rate, if a person does take a more passive role, for whatever reason, it seems they are more the objects of sex than an equal participant in it. And, when they are not feeling good about sex or the relationship, they may see themselves more as an object of sex, and therefore the one to whom it "is done" and the one who is used. This is an unfortunate error, and it is also an unfortunate occurrence for those men who would like to be stroked or to be occasionally seduced or not have to always be the initiator or the more active "worker" during sex.

Social Ostracism, Pregnancy, and Tradition

In much of society there is a tradition that "good girls" don't have sex outside of marriage. There may be a great many irrational

reasons for how this view arose –such as male chauvinism and power dominance or male vanity about the "purity" of the woman a man marries. But there is one very good reason for women, in particular, not to have sex prior to marriage, at least in the past; and that is pregnancy. (Diseases, particularly fatal sexually transmitted diseases are another, but that applies to men as well, so I am not discussing it here.)

In a society where a man can avoid any financial or social responsibility for pregnancy, childbirth, and child rearing, and where many do, and where the full burden falls on the woman, clearly a woman is risking far more than a man when she has sexual intercourse. (Of course, this is not true if the man is responsible and conscientious, or if society will make him be so, but the woman cannot always tell that. And marriage is also no solution to the problems of pregnancy and child rearing if the man is of not much help in the marriage or if divorce is easily obtained and puts more of a burden on the woman with regard to child rearing.) When it is said that "good girls" don't have sex outside of marriage, perhaps it would be more precise to say that "prudent" women do not have (indiscriminate or particularly socially risky) sexual intercourse outside of marriage – if pregnancy is a possibility and if child rearing would be a burden beyond the "normal" difficulty of parenting.

It is, I believe, wrong for women to bear a disproportionally greater, or the entire, burden of child rearing, but when they do, they incur a risk about sex that men do not. And insofar as a boy or man may be irresponsible and cavalier about sex, especially if pretending not to be, he is taking advantage of, or using, a woman when he has sex purely for pleasure, regardless of how willing the woman is at the time or how much pleasure she takes in it, perhaps particularly if she reasonably believes him to be more responsible.

Furthermore, women often bear an even greater burden than mere single-parenthood, since social and workplace ostracism may be added to it. Such added difficulties are, I believe, reprehensible for the most part, but insofar as they exist, it makes the male's

callousness about sexual responsibility even worse, and his sexual treatment of the woman more of "use" than a mutual activity whose consequences are also mutual and mutually shared.

Key Takeaways

- Circumstances show the kinds of deeper considerations that need to be given to any situation where one might feel having been used, accuse someone else of using them, or feel guilty about a (former or soon to be former) partner's accusation.

Key Terms

- The phrases ***"making love" and "having sexual intercourse"*** are intransitive or at least reciprocal verbs describing a reciprocal or mutual activity.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What is meant by sexually using someone, or by being used sexually?

Chapter 35 The Causes of Feelings

Chapter 35 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Describe how difficult, maybe even impossible, it is to know why some people are more attractive and attracting to you than others are, or, than they are to other people. “Chemistry” or attraction between two people seems to be somewhat accidental or random.

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Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare; Hoc tantum possum dicere: non amo te.

translation:

I do not love thee, Sabidius, nor can I say why; I can only say this: I do not love thee. – Martial (cited in Roberts,

1940, p. 473)

paraphrased 1700 years later by Tom Brown: I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.

But why I cannot tell; But this I know full well, I do not love thee, Dr. Fell. (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 473)

I know not why I love this youth; and I have heard you say, Love's reason's without reason. – Shakespeare, *Cymbeline* (4. 2. 20-22)

If a man should importune me to give a reason why I loved him, I find it could no otherwise be expressed than by making answer, Because it was he; because it was I. There is beyond all that I am able to say, I know not what inexplicable and fated power that brought on this union. – Montaigne (cited in Roberts, 1940, p. 474)

I believe that if there are any particular or generalizable causes for feelings of attraction or feelings of aversion, they are as yet unknown. Certainly we may like someone who helps us out when we need help and we may like someone who is nice to us when that is particularly noticeable. And certainly we may intensely dislike someone who treats us ill in a particularly noticeable way. But as I have said repeatedly, this is not always the case. There are those we are attracted to no matter how poorly they treat us, and there are those for whom we have no particular attraction no matter how (noticeably) well they treat us. How many people have been attracted to another and tried everything they could in a nice way to make the other person attracted to them, only to have their efforts fail! How many times may two people behave very similarly (and even look similar) and yet we may be attracted to one but not the other! And how many times is there instant like or dislike for someone without knowing anything about them! Someone who treats us poorly may even entice our attraction for them at first sight or first nasty treatment. And someone who is nice to us at first may simply seem to have no spirit or personality. Again, one person may be attracted to you, another not, even though you treat both the same or behave the same way toward both of them. One person may be attracted to someone who is forbidden to them (by

parents, custom, society, whatever); another may be so influenced by the taboo or prejudice that he or she cannot find attractive those who are forbidden; a third may be attracted to one such forbidden person, but not to any others.

I think the same thing might be said of the causes of our desires or of what we find pleasing. One person likes having his or her back scratched; another does not. I like having my back scratched in some ways but not others. Some people like to have their backs scratched the ways I do not and do not like the ways I do. When I was little, I hated having my ears cleaned out with a cotton swab; now I think it is about the second greatest physical pleasure possible (second to having your back scratched, in the right way, of course…). Some people like to talk, others do not. In my business, I answer my own phone instead of having a secretary. Some people find that terribly unprofessional and are put off by it; others appreciate that I take enough personal interest in people to communicate with them and answer their questions directly.

Most of us can probably think of things we like or dislike as well as people we like or dislike for no reason we can think of at all. When I was in high school and was in (unrequited) love with a girl I would gladly have died for, or to be with, I wanted to walk her home – miles out of my way. She had a girlfriend who by my or any objective standards was definitely beautiful, warm, nice, intelligent, friendly. The girl I loved told me that her girlfriend had said that I could walk her home if I wanted to. But I didn't want to. I wanted to walk my love home, not her friend, regardless of how beautiful, available, etc. her friend was. Why did I love the girl I did? Why not the other girl? Why be attracted to the one but not the other? Who knows?

Or, as in the case of the student who badly wanted to water ski, though he had never been able to do so, why did he want to? He couldn't know he would enjoy it because he had never done it. He did not want to just so that he could go fast on the water; he could do that in his boat, but that was not enough for him. He did not want to do it because he saw others having a good time doing it,

since he had seen others enjoying caviar and he did not even have the slightest urge to try eating it. After years of trying, he finally did learn and he did enjoy it. Why did he want to learn that particular sport; why did he enjoy water skiing? I don't know. I doubt anyone does. Psychiatrists or novelists can invent whatever stories they may like about why we like the things we do or the people we do, but it is difficult to verify that such stories actually capture the determining causes of our likes and dislikes.

So-called Aberrant Relationships

This leads me to a point that I have mentioned briefly before, namely that my talk about relationships has not been specifically about heterosexual relationships, except perhaps in discussions of pregnancy. There are numerous cases where individuals develop romantic attractions that are at least statistically abnormal, and often not understandable at all to many others. There are homosexual attractions, there are romantic and/or sexual attractions between siblings and between parents and children. There are romantic attractions between people of vast age differences, age differences that would be romantically repugnant to most people.

But in a sense, statistically speaking any particular romantic relationship could be considered an ***aberrant relationship***, in that for everyone who might be attracted to another romantically, there are probably thousands of people who would not be. This does not, however, generally bother anyone, except in certain cases of public displays of affection where at least one of the persons is particularly repulsive looking to the onlooker.

The point is however that attractions can develop for ways that seem to have no reason. I do not know why I like some particular people and dislike some particular people. I do not know why I am attracted to some women and not to others who may be equally as pretty, articulate, intelligent, nice, friendly, conscientious, etc. I do not know why I like females of all ages better in general than I do males, not just in romantic ways, but even simply for talking to.

Many people have said they think some men are men's men; others, women's men. Likewise some women prefer the company of men; others, of women. I find that, for me, women are generally easier to talk with, more open, less ostentatious, more sincere, honest, open-minded, introspective, and more appreciative of higher values than men. Some people find men more frequently that way than women. I simply do not. The idea of an outing, of whatever sort, with "the guys", just for male companionship, has no appeal whatsoever to me. I may prefer the company of some men for some things, for example as a tennis opponent or partner at a particular time, but that is more dependent on their particular skill and personality and the kind of tennis I want to play that day – perhaps hard and demanding – rather than because they are a guy. If I knew a woman as good or better, I would probably be just as happy or happier with her as a partner or opponent. But I do not travel in some of the better tennis circles, so I do not personally know many women who play the way I would like to when I am in that sort of mood. But at any rate, I cannot imagine calling up a guy for tennis just in order to play tennis with, or to have the companionship of, a male. Of course, there are some particular men whom I like to talk with and some particular women I do not like to be with. But in general I am more likely to get along with women better than with men. I do not know why this is so. Nor do I know why it is this way, or the opposite way, for other men, or for women, or why it makes no difference to some. Some people also have some areas of interest with one sex and other areas for the other sex. The obvious examples are people who like to do most activities, except sex, with their own sex.

Attraction, particularly sexual and romantic attraction, being hard to explain, it is not clear why homosexual and other statistically abnormal attractions would not occur in some individuals. Intellectually, it seems to me no more odd that a man should have sexual attractions toward some man than that he should have sexual attractions toward some particular woman that I could also not possibly be interested in sexually. It seems no more odd for a man

to be sexually attracted toward another man, in whom I am not interested, than that some woman should be attracted to him. If a woman could be interested in kissing some fellow I have no interest in kissing, why could not some man have such an interest.

Emotionally, of course, certain things may seem repugnant to certain people, but one has to be careful in trying to generalize about, or prescribe against, things just because they are personally emotionally repugnant. The idea of having sex with one of their parents is repugnant to most people, but happily it was not repugnant to your other parent. Even the idea of their parents having sex with each other is repugnant to most people, but that is not something we would want to forbid. There would be much celibacy indeed, if I were able to prevent women from having sex with anyone else just because the idea of my having sex with those women is repugnant to me. Whatever the good reasons there might be to try to prevent incest, homosexuality, etc., they ought not to be dependent just on our sense of repugnance. For example, there are genetic reasons against incest that would result in pregnancy; and there are the reasons for protecting minor children from sex since they are unable to give a realistic, fully informed, or meaningful consent to it.

The appeal or repugnance of masturbation also seems to be something somewhat inexplicable. Some people seem to enjoy it; others do not. It also seems to be something you learn during childhood because it feels good to you and you want to do it or else it is very difficult to learn to enjoy. What makes for good sex is generally your desire for it, not as with the girl previously mentioned, some intellectual curiosity about it. "Try it; you'll like it" just is usually not true for any sexual experience, at least not the first time – and not if you really are not in the mood, and can not get into the mood. Further, masturbation, even learned early, usually has only particular ways that it is pleasant for a given person, and other ways that just do not work. It seems very individual and very much related to nothing else in particular.

Many sexual preferences and likes or dislikes, whether

autosexual, heterosexual, or homosexual seem to appear most readily at some early stage in life, and are difficult to change later. Why different desires and preferences appear for different people, I do not know. But intellectually at any rate, homosexual attractions should seem no more strange or repulsive than heterosexual ones. And this may seem particularly easy to see when one is in no mood for sex of any sort. In such a mood all sex may seem unreasonable and repulsive.

Key Takeaways

- Even if you know what it is about someone that you find desirable and attractive about them, that does not mean you will find other people with those very same qualities, maybe even to a greater degree, to be desirable or attractive. That seems to signify it is not just those qualities that attract you to the one you do find desirable and lovable.

Key Terms

- **Aberrant Relationship** defined by the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "different from the usual or natural type".

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question:*** What are the reasons for attraction?
- ***Question***: If you are attracted to someone who most other people are not attracted to, doesn't that make your attraction for them abnormal?

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Chapter 36 Some Other Writers on Love

Chapter 36 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Recognize the problems with typical kinds of explanations about love which are generally less analytic, less logical, and/or less evidence-based.

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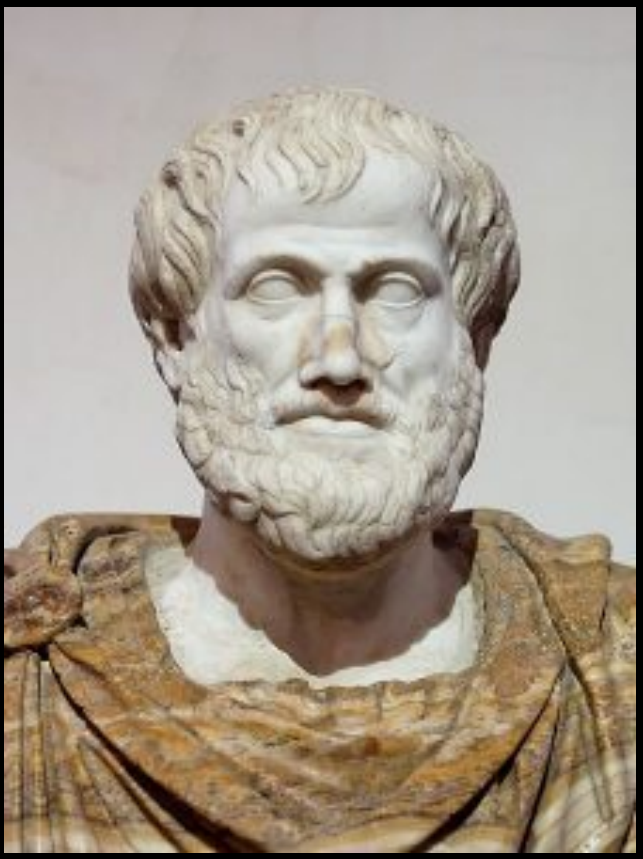

Watch this video or scan the QR code to learn more about the philosophy of Aristotle.

I want to point out what I believe are some flaws in some particular points about love by other authors and also to point out what I think is an erroneous style of analysis of love. I believe some of these points and this style have been unduly influential. Others demonstrate how some views about love and about relationships can sound quite plausible at initial reading and yet still be seen to

be erroneous under more reasonable scrutiny. I believe the proper approach to the subject is the analytic kind I have taken in this book, trying to put into a sensible and reasonable general perspective the kinds of feelings and experiences that are open to most people, and that happen to many; but a perspective that at the same time tries to reasonably take into account the realistic differences there are among people.

In their book *Mirages of Marriage* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1968), which is marvelous for its clear, concrete language and ideas, and for its many practical insights, W.J. Lederer and Don D. Jackson work with Harry Stack Sullivan's definition of love (p. 42): "When the satisfaction or the security of another person becomes as significant to one as is one's own satisfaction or security, then the state of love exists." (From Harry Stack Sullivan's *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1953, pp. 42-43.)

Though on the whole I believe this is an excellent practical book with a number of theoretical insights that are worth considering, there are a few things I disagree with in it. One is this theoretical definition of love. I disagree for the following reasons:

(1) One might feel another's happiness or satisfaction and security are extremely important – a counselor, teacher, doctor, or anyone might expend a great deal of time and energy and worry concerning a patient, student, or friend because he cares about other people. Indeed, one might hope all of us would care about each others', or many others', happiness very much. This state might be considered love, or loving, in a very general "Christian" or humanitarian sense, but it is not the kind of love in the general sort of romantic sense involving relationships that we are concerned with here. It has nothing to do with specific kinds of feelings of attraction people might have for each other, and it also fails, I think,

(2) in that it focuses only on the concern people have for a loved one's well-being and not on how successfully or unsuccessfully one might actually be in bringing that well-being about. If you care about another's well-being but are unable to provide any for them, then, as I have argued extensively, though they can be attracted

to you and though they can care about you, they should not be said to love you, since their loving you involves your actually being good for them and making them happy, and happy in meaningful ways. Otherwise all they could have (though that is considerable) is attraction, concern, infatuation, or charity (and in extreme cases, martyrdom). And, if all you get out of the relationship is concern about their well-being, you too, do not have love, but just that concern. You or they could even harm each other though you both were trying not to, and again there would be some sort of self-sacrificing care and concern in the relationship, but it would generally not be what we would want to characterize as a loving relationship.

(3) A person could be concerned about another's well-being for selfish reasons, because he is dependent on them for something important to him; this would meet the definition but would not be love.

(4) As I have argued extensively throughout the book, satisfaction and security are not the main or only goals of ethics or the good in life. A person might properly keep appointments though he would be more satisfied to sleep late in bed or carouse with friends. A person might want to heighten his sensitivity to the suffering of others in order to be a better person; couples may want to rear their children to be sensitive and caring about the needs of others and to be kind. But sensitivity often leads to sorrow and dissatisfaction; a case could be made that selfish, insensitive people tend to have the most satisfaction (and possibly even security, at least in terms of what money can buy), though the satisfaction is undeserved.

(5) It is not just happiness or satisfaction and security that we seek, but deserved happiness or satisfaction – satisfaction that comes in certain ways, such as through creativity, hard work, perseverance, thinking, honorable acts, etc., or satisfaction that is the result of delight in something good and worthwhile, such as enjoying music, literature, etc. If we could be satisfied by taking a

magic pill or pharmaceutical lotus leaf, that is not what we would want or consider to provide satisfaction in the right way.

(6) Some people do not care about whether their loved ones are concerned so much with their satisfaction and security; they simply appreciate the fact those loved ones help provide it, not out of concern, but just naturally, as an outgrowth of the way those loved ones are. If someone, say, likes wit and falls in love with someone whose nature includes wit, then it does not matter whether they are being witty "for" their loved one or just simply being witty because they like to be. I even have one friend who hates to think you are doing something "for" her; she wants what she benefits from to be things that you would want to do anyway. She likes to feel she or her character then somehow blends nicely with you or your character. And, in fact, this is the way I think love generally is, though I think she takes too far or expects too much from the idea of naturally blending and never wanting someone else to make some sort of sacrifice for her. (And in fact she is very altruistic, however, and would make all kinds of sacrifices for you; she just does not want you to make any for her.) Perfect natural blends are not likely; even in the best relationships there are probably some sacrifices by each partner.

(7) Not being a concerned and caring person about other people's security and satisfaction says more about your general nature than about whether you are in love or not. I think everyone should consider other people's satisfaction and security, though proper fairness to one's self demands that you are not always self-sacrificing because of it.

(8) I think people can love from afar, loving someone who makes them more satisfied and secure and to whom they are attracted, without being able to, needing to, or even trying to reciprocate. Sometime such reciprocation might even be unwarranted. For example, I think a student could love a (married) teacher, but it might be inappropriate to act toward that teacher in the way one might want to act toward a peer one loved in the same way. One

could love a television celebrity or an author who they find attracting and who makes a meaningful contribution to their life.

(9) Finally, (and this one is technical, but I think necessary to be dealt with in case anyone else tries to resurrect a kind of definition of love similar to Sullivan's above.) If one is not particularly concerned about his own well-being, and is then equally unconcerned about the well-being of others, by the above definition he would love others. But terrorists who kill themselves with their victims could hardly be said to love their victims. For the definition to do even what they want it to, it requires not only for there to be at least equal concern for another as for one's self, but that there should be some reasonably substantial, actual (positive) concern for both.

Aristotle

In Books ("chapters" actually) 8 and 9 of his *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (op. cit.) seems to have been concerned with many of the same questions I am. But my answers are for the most part different from his. For example, he thought affection had to have a motive, either (1) expected good or pleasure from the loved one or expected usefulness from the loved one for the gaining of good or pleasure. But since he thought usefulness changed with time and circumstances and that goodness pretty much did not, he thought that friendship based on usefulness was not likely to last and that friendship based on gaining goodness would. Aristotle also thought that "like attracted like" with regard to good people and so their acting and being alike (and relatively stable so) and their seeking each others' welfare because they were good, would cause their friendship to last a long time. However, (1) I do not believe affection needs a motive. I think we become enamored of people often for unknown reasons or causes, if any; perhaps sometimes more because of our own states of mind at the time than because of anything they really offer. Consider, for example, the phenomena of a person's being attracted to someone who is very much like a person who he or she was not attracted to just a bit earlier (and)

even though he or she knew the first person might have done him more good, given more pleasure, or have been of more use.

(2) Often someone can actually be bad for us or of no use in promoting our well-being, and we can know this and yet still be attracted to him or her. (Rollo May, for example, on page 283 of *Love and Will* (May, 1969) seems to think instant attraction is because (?) "the suddenly beloved elicits a composite image from our experiences in our past or in our dreams of our future; we spontaneously experience him or her in relation to our personal 'style of life' which we form and carry with us all our lives and which becomes clearer the more we know ourselves." I think I've become fond or enamored of and attracted to people without all that happening, though I am not really sure what experience is characterized in the second part of that statement.)

(3) Usefulness is not necessarily so transient a thing. Many husbands and wives probably operate together a long time simply because they find it more efficient and convenient to remain a "team". Many workers and their managers can be useful to each other their entire careers. But, also

(4) it seems many people can be useful to us and we yet do not necessarily have an affection for them or their use; for example, an unfriendly boss-employee relationship or an addict's feelings toward a pusher and habit he despises.

(5) I see no reason bad people cannot like each other or be lasting friends.

(6) It is not clear there are any (perfectly) good people in Aristotle's sense or that if there are more than one, they act alike anyway or that they would necessarily be attracted to each other, or that like attracts like in general. (Research seems to show that among people in general it is often that opposites attracts as well as "likes"; often it is people with complementary personalities or qualities that attract each other also.)

These last two points, however, would require extensive analysis of Aristotle's notion of the good man, and that is not feasible here.

Others I have seen speak to the kinds of issues I have been concerned with in this book are various clergymen speaking at weddings or about marriage, Abigail Van Buren, Ann Landers, some *Readers' Digest* articles, the "Playboy Advisor", Dr. Ruth Westheimer on television, etc., though I have sought in this book to give a far more reasoned, clear, sustained, and supported account than any of these.

But I have found these kinds of things more helpful, when correct, than, for example, many kinds of professional philosophic or psychoanalytic works on the topic of love. One philosophical difference of opinion (between Robert Solomon and Hugh T. Wilder in Alan Soble's *Philosophy of Sex*) involves whether, if sex is a form of communication, masturbation then is like writing a letter but not mailing it, like talking to oneself, or like thinking aloud or writing for one's own pleasure or clarification of ideas. I think this kind of argument is somewhat silly and misses the real nuances and points of masturbation. Further, they seem to miss the more important point that sex, as I have extensively argued, is not a meaningful form of communication – even when it is interpersonal.

Though Erich Fromm, in his *Art of Loving* (Fromm, 1956), does have a section on the practice of love, the book is far less practical than might have been hoped. Fromm's guidelines of discipline, concentration, patience, concern, overcoming of narcissism, faith, reason, etc. hardly tell one much about whether a particular relationship he or she is involved in is good or not, partially good or not, or what. I think these points, though useful, need to be at least elaborated.

I also think more needs to be said about what Fromm calls pseudo-loves, why they are bad or wrong or not really love at all. In fact, I think it is a mistake simply to label them pseudo- love, and better to say they are relationships which some call love, which others do not, but which are bad or good because … or that could be impoverished or improved by….

Fromm states "every theory of love must begin with a theory of man, of human existence." He then goes on to describe man's

anxiety arising from his separation from the rest of the universe and others in it, and love as a solution to that anxiety problem. I do not exactly know what a theory of man or human existence is; but I do think that to talk about human relationships, whether meaningful, loving, friendship, or of any sort, one must know some things about people. If this knowledge constitutes a theory about man (which I doubt), fine; but I do not think one needs some (other sort of) theory of man to talk sensibly about love any more than one needs a theory of man to be a good football coach (and I do not mean just a winning football coach), teacher, welfare worker, nurse, policeman, or whatever. One does have to be sensitive, have some understanding of people, be discerning, etc., but not necessarily have some (one) theory about the human condition.

Further, to say that love is an answer to a problem – here the problem of man's anxiety due to separation – is to give a use for love, not a description of it. Love is not explained or described by saying it is a cure for anxiety any more than water or Gatorade is explained or described by saying it is a cure for thirst.

And I am not certain that love is the answer to anxiety anyway. First of all, surely there can be love without anxiety; there seem to be people who love and are loved who were not particularly anxiety-ridden. But moreover, there are people who are loved who are still tremendously anxiety-ridden. In fact, many people are anxiety-ridden because they worry very much about their families and loved ones. Of course, the world would be nicer and less

anxiety producing if more people or everyone were loving, but that is just as true if more people or everyone were understanding and ethical, including being properly compassionate. Again, that may be a way of describing a kind of Christian or humanitarian love, not the kind specific to more personal or intimate relationships. But even that kind of humanitarian love would not particularly eliminate or "cure" anxiety due to fear of physical or non-moral catastrophe – terminal illness, severe birth defect, accident, earthquake, tornado, etc., though it would go a long way in some cases in making such

catastrophe perhaps a little more bearable. (In the Birmingham, Alabama Museum of Art, there once was an exhibit of art, particularly paintings, whose content had to do with medicine. Some of the 19th century paintings depicting the helplessness of grieving and compassionate physicians besides dead or dying patients almost seem to make that a more tolerable situation than those of the twentieth century depicting the more often successful technological, but impersonal, awesomeness of contemporary medical resources. Certainly both advanced medical resources and compassion are important, and in some instances the two can be found together. But not often enough. And at least in all those cases where death is unavoidable or unpreventable anyway, the compassion and understanding is far more important than the technology. Still, this compassion and understanding are not love, even when small parts of it.)

Fromm believed that capitalism is a deep part of the lack of love and disintegration of it, and it may be to the extent that a capitalistic society can let money and profit seem more important than anything else, including relationships. But relationships occur whenever people are in contact with each other; and some relationships are better or worse than others, and some have feelings and aspects other relationships do not have. Some of these will then be what I consider love. And it seems to me all this would occur no matter what the economic system. It is important to talk about what kinds of aspects and feelings are good and ought to be cultivated. Economic, political, and social systems and conditions certainly influence people and their relationships. So do many other things, such as health, job satisfaction, etc., but until we have an understanding of what relationships really involve, it is difficult to understand exactly how these systems and conditions influence them or what kinds of things need to be done, perhaps within the system, to counteract the corrupting and disrupting forces. For example, it seems to me that lack of understanding of ethics and moral reasoning skills (as I explained them in the chapter on ethics) accounts for many of the problems people have in relationships, but

I do not see how capitalism, as such (or by itself), can be blamed for that lack of knowledge. The attainment of maximum financial profit may be incompatible with the attainment of other values some times, but people can often opt, even in a capitalistic economic system, for achieving those other values at the expense of greater profit. Many people do that who, for example, pass up job promotions requiring relocation in order to stay in a city they and their family really like. Capitalism, whatever its failings, does not, by itself, force anyone to choose money over more important values. Insensitivity to, or ignorance of, that fact or those more important values, combined with capitalism may cause someone to choose profit over more important values and force that choice on dependent employees; but ignorance and insensitivity, it seems to me, can occur in any system and cause or allow people to choose or force on others values that are worse than possible alternatives. And I would think that kind of ignorance and insensitivity could be battled in a capitalist society as well as in any other. I doubt that any economic system just by itself is the cause or remedy of many social problems or of ignorance in important areas.

In the chapters on ethics I explained why I thought psychoanalytic theories were in general suspect, since other kinds of therapies often work better and since the kinds of stories that psychiatrists invent to lend credence to their theories (often) seem to be simply untestable, inventive fabrications. Freud's specific idea that love is "aim-inhibited sex" or the result of a blocked sex drive seems false, given the ample historical, sociological, and anthropological evidence of persons and societies where there is love in spite of sexual liberalism and fulfillment. (See J. Richard Udry (1966), *The Social Context of Marriage*, Lippincott, specifically pp. 184ff.)

Rollo May

Although Rollo May's book *Love and Will* (op. cit.) has some good points in it, I am disappointed by many of the kinds of arguments it contains.

(1) Dr. May argues from word etymologies, which at best show

what ancient civilizations and word "coiners" believed, not what is necessarily true or even reasonable.

(2) He argues from (often psychoanalytic) interpretations of Greek myths and biblical stories which at best give interesting interpretations to such stories and perhaps show what early people believed but do not therefore give evidence of the truths which May claims. Some interpretations he gives seem a bit far-fetched anyway: concerning Jacob's wrestling with the angel and his incurred thigh injury May says, "...he limped away from the scene; he is now a cripple. The parallel to sexual intercourse is clear." (p. 171) More like imaginary, I would think. He says of ***Eros*****'** bringing about fertilization of the earth by shooting an arrow into the barren ground that the arrow is phallic. But how else would a Greek myth show vegetation coming into being – not bullets shot into the ground, not some hero or god doing the menial work of planting. That pretty much leaves something like arrows or spears. One might ask then whether arrows rather than spears show feelings of sexual inadequacy...or perhaps confidence!

Often, anyway, his passages do not even show what he says they do. There is no way the following passage can fit his comment about it concerning the three aspects of time – past, present, and future.

"Once when 'Care' was crossing a river, she saw some clay; she thoughtfully took up a piece and began to shape it. While she was meditating on what she had made, Jupiter came by. 'Care' asked him to give it spirit, and this he gladly granted. But when she wanted her name to be bestowed upon it, he forbade this, and demanded that it be given his name instead. While 'Care' and Jupiter were disputing, Earth arose and desired that her own name be conferred on the creature, since she had furnished it with part of her body. They asked Saturn to be their arbiter, and he made the following decision, which seemed a just one: 'Since you, Jupiter have given its spirit, you shall receive that spirit at its death; and since you, Earth, have given its body, you shall receive its body. But since "Care" first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is

now a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called "homo", for it is made out of *humus* (earth).'" (pp. 290-291)

Of this, May says (p. 291):

"This … shows the realization of the three aspects of time: past, future, and present. Earth gets man in the past, Zeus in the future; but since 'Care' first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives,' i.e., in the present."

But Earth does not get man in the past with Zeus getting him in the future. The passage says Earth gave its body and will get it back, just as Jupiter gave its spirit and will get it back. The time sequences are exactly parallel; **both** had something in the past and will regain it in the future. Further, man's life is not some one-dimensional point in time, but itself has a past and future, so "Care" has man in more than just some "present". This kind of error would be of minor importance except that May then goes on to try to use it to make important points.

"This excursion into ontology makes it clearer why care and will are so closely related, indeed are two aspects of the same experience…"

In a similar example, he says (p. 79), quoting Socrates from the "Symposium":

"Those who are pregnant in the body only, betake themselves to women and beget children–this is the character of their love; their offspring, as they hope, will preserve their memory and give them the blessedness and immortality which they desire in the future. But souls which are pregnant – for there certainly are men who are more creative in their souls than in their bodies – conceive that which is proper for the soul to conceive or contain. And what are these conceptions? – wisdom and virtue in general. And such creators are poet and all artists who are deserving of the name inventor."

But he says of this:

"The Greeks also knew that there always is a tendency for *eros* to be reduced simply to sexual desire– *epithymia* or lust in their terms.

But they insisted that the biological is not denied but incorporated and transcended in *eros*."

Yet Socrates is simply stating that man seeks to become immortal in two ways, through biological and/or through intellectual creativity. There is no mention of one's being better than the other or of one's transcending or incorporating the other.

(3) Dr. May holds that the problems of the neurotic and the vision of the artist are prophetic for society but he offers no way to distinguish truly prophetic visions or insights from ones which do not come true. He offers no suggestion for distinguishing between neurotic problems which (a) will become symptomatic of society at large, as the environment, which is supposedly disturbing sensitive neurotic people, now become stronger and supposedly more overwhelming to everyone, and ones (b) which are simply individual problems or problems only of neurotics and which will never become problems faced by larger numbers of people. He only gives examples of past visions or neurotic difficulties that have shown themselves as problems of much of society later. Are we to believe there were no "false" artistic vision and no neurotic problems which are not prophecies of normal states to come!

(4) He argues from literature; but, again, just citing other people who (seem to) hold your views does not show your views to be true or even probable.

(5) He cites analogies from such things as Mozart's music and from the animal kingdom which are interesting but which, as evidence for his views, are often simply amusing. One particularly stands out: citing that love and/or sex and death have an intimate relationship, he recounts how male bees die soon after copulation and how the female praying mantis bites off the head of the male during copulation, which makes him jerk that much harder during his sex and death throes. Apart from recent research reports that this is not true about the praying mantis, the fact that sex and death in this fashion is the most minute exception to the world's creatures does not seem to matter. That the male bee and (perhaps)

praying mantis die during or shortly after intercourse does not seem particularly relevant even to antelope, let alone to humans.

He argues here that it is death and the knowledge of death that makes love possible, that heightens love. I disagree. Certainly the awareness of death helps us to take things which are dear less for granted. But these things must already be things which are dear to us, otherwise we would not care whether we lost them or not. The awareness of death does not make hazardous waste, ugly art, stupidity, irresponsibility, or child abuse more dear to us or heighten their intensity. The beauty of love is prior to the acute awareness of its potential loss. I would turn a phrase and probably be in agreement with Erich Fromm here that it is not death or the thought of death which makes love possible, but it is love and friendship which make death and the thought of death sometimes acceptable or at least not so lonely and terrifying an experience. The fact that love and death go together in so many stories that May points to is perhaps because death is a permanent type of parting (afterlife notwithstanding), and parting from a loved one evokes very poignant emotion, something that literature often tries to do.

(6) May argues such things as:

"The fact that love is personal is shown in the love act itself. Man is the only creature who makes love face to face, who copulates looking at his partner. ... This opens the whole front of the person...all the parts which are most tender and vulnerable—to the kindness or cruelty of the partner. The man can thus see in the eyes of the woman the nuances of delight or awe, the tremulousness or the angst; it is the posture of the ultimate baring of one's self." (p. 311)

Let me parody that to:

The fact that having one's teeth examined, cleaned, drilled, and fixed is a personal experience is shown in the act itself. Man is the only creature who has this done face to face with one of his own kind. This opens the whole front of the person, all the parts which are the most tender and vulnerable, to the kindness and cruelty of the dentist and patient. The dentist can thus see in the eyes of

the patient the nuances of delight or awe, the tremulousness or the angst; it is the posture....

Let me also add, as a friend pointed out to me, that many times, particularly in the past, it was safer and far less trusting and vulnerable to be turned toward another than to have your back turned to him.

And further, anyone with any kind of sensitivity can usually tell, from almost any angle or direction, and often from some distance away, when someone is afraid or anxious. One does not always have to look into another's eyes to tell. On a date, one can often tell by the feel of how someone holds your hand whether they are doing it perfunctorily or passionately. More intimate sex is no different. There are ways besides looking into someone's eyes (if people even do look into each others' eyes during intercourse) to understand how they feel.

(7) He spends pages arguing that sex without passion is an empty experience and that man does not see this and is heading toward the practice of apathetic sex. But his arguments are of the above sort, and my students in undergraduate introductory philosophy made the point independently and far more succinctly, forcibly, and reasonably in class that sex without love can be, and generally is empty. They seemed to see that. Further, in contrast to May (I think), it is not always the case that sex without long term passion or without love is empty; there are probably plenty of people who can generate sufficient short-term horizontal passion to make it a good experience for them even though they have little or no "general" passion toward the partner. Further, sex with a stranger or new acquaintance can be very exciting and reassuring. And sex with a friend or new acquaintance can be very comforting at a particular time or very important in any of a number of ways without being sex between two long time passionate lovers. And there are plenty of people who can essentially (mutually) gratify each other for the sheer physical pleasure they get or cause–especially if they both know and accept their own and each others' motives. Sex may have

many motives besides love, and not all those other motives prevent it from being a wondrous experience. Nor, of course, does love insure that it will be a wondrous experience.

(8) May thinks that the Master-Johnson researches "are symptomatic of a culture in which the personal meaning of love has been progressively lost," when in fact the research has as one goal helping people lead better and more loving lives through having fewer problems of sex and fertility. There is no claim by Masters and Johnson that all of love can be reduced to sex, nor even that all of sex (meaningfulness, emotional closeness, fantasy, psychology, etc.) can be reduced to sexual physiology.

(9) Some passages do not even seem to have a clear meaning, though they sound very nice or poetic. "We are in *eros* not only when we experience our biological, lustful energies but also when we are able to open ourselves and participate via imagination and emotional and spiritual sensitivity, in forms and meanings beyond ourselves in the interpersonal world and the world of nature around us.

"*Eros* is the binding element par excellence. It is the bridge between being and becoming, and it binds fact and value together. *Eros*, in short, is the original creative force of Hesiod now transmuted into power which is both 'inside' and 'outside' the person. We see that *eros* has much in common with the concept of intentionality proposed in this book; both presuppose that man pushes toward uniting himself with the object not only of his love but his knowledge. And this very process implies that a man already participates to some extent in the knowledge he seeks and the person he loves." (p. 79)

All in all *Love and Will* is the kind of writing that I think helps prevent clear understanding and dialogue about love and relationships, rather than the kind that helps promote them. It is the sort of writing that, because it refers to many kinds of things that today only scholars tend to know about, sounds very scholarly, and then

may intimidate people who cannot address the topic in those kinds of terms and who do not realize you do not have to.

Key Takeaways

- If you compare the analysis in this text with that of other authors, you will see most leave out crucial considerations.
- Some views about love and about relationships can sound quite plausible at initial reading and yet still be seen to be erroneous under more reasonable scrutiny.

Key Terms

- ***Eros*** (as defined by Rollo May) "is the binding element par excellence. It is the bridge between being and becoming, and it binds fact and value together. *Eros*, in short, is the original creative force of Hesiod now transmuted into power which is both 'inside' and 'outside' the person."

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What were the motives Aristotle thought affection had to have?
- ***Question***: What problems can there be about using myths to explain the nature and significance of sex?
- ***Question***: What are some problems with Harry Stack Sullivan's definition of love: "When the satisfaction or the security of another person becomes as significant to one as is one's own satisfaction or security, then the state of love exists."

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Chapter 37 Some Personal Comments and Notions of a More Intuitive Nature

Chapter 37 Learning Objectives

Upon reading this chapter, the student should be able to:

- Discover the importance of reflecting on one's experiences, not just having them, in order to get the most significance from them one can.

Watch this video or scan the QR code to understand more what makes a good life.

I think there is a quality which is part of our humanity, that (when it is exercised) is one of the qualities that makes us meaningfully distinct from other species. I think it is a quality capable of bringing about much good, and I think that it ought to be cultivated for that reason and because it is unique and special to us. I think our humanity lies in part not in our having experiences, because every animal has experiences, but in our reflecting and in our reflections upon those experiences. It lies not in our suffering but in our sorrow, our sympathy, our compassion, and our attempts to understand suffering and to remedy it. It lies even perhaps in our bitterness toward the perpetrators of needless suffering, but only in a reflected bitterness wrought from a sense of justice and our compassion toward the suffering victim, rather than from an immediacy of vengefulness. And our humanity lies not in our joyous moments but in our appreciation of those joyous moments. In short, our humanity lies in part in our attempts, and our successes, in trying to put our experiences into a meaningful perspective.

And though not every joyful experience needs to be meaningful,

rewarding, reflected on, or etched indelibly in memory for future savoring and appreciation, somewhere some experiences in everyone's life should be. One should be capable of such experiences. Those who lack the ability for both appreciation and for sorrow seem to lack a part of humane-ess that makes it difficult to consider them as very worthy or full human beings. The fellow who can only talk about his exploits, his successes and failures, but not about what they mean to him and/or to others, is perhaps whom we should call (as many do in a dating context) an animal, rather than a person of merit. The guys or girls who are only interested in whether they can score either sexually or professionally, but not in how they score or what it means, other than some momentary personal or selfish reward, seem somehow to be using less than the total capacity that human beings (should) have.

When you have a tremendously moving experience, it is often disappointing to share it with someone who is not so moved. There is very little more frustrating than sharing an experience that is soul-shaking to you, with someone who finds it trivial, stupid, boring, bad, simply fun or just another nice time, and who will neither savor it, cherish it, nor remember it in the way that you will, or would like to if their attitude and presence does not ruin it for you. Sometimes people are not moved by an experience because they do not have the necessary sensitivity; sometimes it is simply a matter of a cultural or generation "gap". I was 18 years old when John F. Kennedy, whom I idolized, was assassinated; and it is probably the saddest and one of the most transforming moments of my life. Yet to my children or to all the children born afterward, it is just a simple, cold historical fact. Just as World Wars I and II and the deaths of Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt are for me. Well-written biographies and histories, and well-produced films impart some of the experience of the times, but it is not the same as having been there and lived through it.

It is sometimes a lonely and saddening to appreciate something your companion does not. *Dr. Zhivago* is, I think, one of the finest

movies ever made, and when I first saw it, I was so moved I could hardly speak when it was over. But I saw it with my sister who was still in high school at the time and she could not understand why anyone would want to make a movie "about communism." She missed the point entirely, and when she persisted in speaking in high school platitudes I had to pretend to threaten her with letting her walk home if she did not simply quit saying anything about the movie. I asked some friends to go see it, but after they did, their only comment was they did not like stories about married people who "fooled around". Agggggg! It was not until years later that I met a person (college roommate) who I learned was as affected by the movie as I was and who appreciated it as much as I did. That year it came back to the town where we were in school and I went to see it for the second time, and got even more out of it than I had the first. He and I stayed up all night discussing its remarkable subtleties and insights, heightening even further each other's appreciation for the film. He got so enthusiastic about it that the following night he went to see it again himself, and that occasioned another long, intense discussion and analysis, as he got even more out of it again with this viewing.

There was an interview before a World Series baseball game with a ballplayer whose series' share seemed to mean to him only being able to put in a backyard barbecue. His wife was going to play tennis one morning, while this interview was being taped; he told her to win – because they only had winners in their family. Yet it seemed to me that if that was the extent of his thoughts he himself was only a loser. Maybe she was only playing tennis for fun and companionship or to improve her skills or to learn new shots or to challenge herself to her capacity, or for some reason other than just winning. Would he have liked her opponent to forfeit? I have memories of Jimmy Connors, certainly a player who liked to win as much as anyone ever has, in a match with Manuel Orantes, Connors trying desperately to massage the cramp out of Orantes' leg and begging the umpire for an extension of time for Orantes so that

the two could finish the match, and not have him win by default. Unlike the baseball player above, it was not the winning that was important to Connors, but the winning over a worthy (in this case, healthy) opponent. Even in some of his losses of important matches, where he played well, but his opponent played fantastically, he has seemed most appreciative of the event and of his opponent's talent on that particular day. Once, when asked to comment on his losing match (the finals of the U.S. Open championship, I believe), he said to the crowd and to the national television audience a one-word expletive, phrased in a humorous way with a twinkle of appreciation in both his tone and his eye showing both disbelief and amused frustration at his opponent's inhuman skill that day at repelling Connor's own superb efforts. It was obvious he was well-aware that he had been defeated by one of the best performances and in one of the best matches of all time and that his efforts had helped make it such a terrific match. He knew he had played extremely well and that his own performance that day would have won over any other player or at any other time.

After one of the most exciting World Series games ever, the sixth game of the 1975 World Series between the Reds and the Red Sox, Pete Rose, as competitive a person as anyone, when asked about the difficult loss that then also made the Reds have to face a seventh game said something like, "Gee, it was just such a great ball game, I'm glad I got to be a part of it! Wasn't it fantastic the way that…!" People like Rose and Connors in these cases seem more fully human and more appealing because they have their sport in an interesting and valuable perspective, instead of just playing it like gorillas or robots.

Frustrating to many are people who have been fortunate to have traveled abroad, but who only saw that the countries they visited were not like here, and were, they then thought, therefore obviously inferior, particularly if they could not (conveniently) buy the kinds of things there they wanted or could get here. Such people spend a lot of time, energy, and effort going places to miss the most important

things – seeing the contributions, life styles, and perspectives that other cultures have to offer and seeing in what ways that sometimes being different is better. Such insights can be refreshing, often making you see that things you assumed could only be done a certain way could be done quite differently with the same or better effect. They can help you see that things you thought you could not live without can be done without quite well. And they can help you see afresh the things you and your family and friends always did that you took for granted and assumed were part of human nature, though they are not.

One could go on and on in the world of sports or business or whatever about people's attitudes toward what they are doing and how they are doing it. But it is the people who have some sort of reflective attitude toward what they are doing that we seem to (or at least that I seem to) respect and appreciate rather than those who just walk to the bank or carve another notch in a gun, bedpost, or barbecue.

There was a movie by, I think, Roger Vadim, with, I think, Jane Fonda, one of those good movies that is in a few theaters for a few days that only a few people ever see before it is consigned to oblivion. It was called *Circle of Love*. It was set in eighteenth or nineteenth century France and portrayed a series of affairs or one time sexual trysts, starting with a soldier's seducing of a young woman before his going off to war. The next affair is between the soldier and another woman, the third between that woman and another man, then that man and another woman, and so on, following the life of the new partner of each lover until he or she has a new lover. Finally, the movie comes back around to a soldier having an encounter with a young woman. A gnarled old woman appears as a washerwoman or servant. When the young girl tries to hide her rendezvous with the soldier, the old woman, who one sees now is the same woman as the first young girl, says, with her eyes obviously reminiscent and grateful, "Ah, such a fine young soldier you have; …I too once knew a fine young soldier…."

I saw this movie shortly after hearing what I thought had been a very good lecture about how sex with someone you cared about and had an ongoing stable relationship with was better than just a ***fleeting sexual experience*** or such an experience for just fleeting physical gratification. That lecture seemed reasonable, but something about it did not seem quite right and kept gnawing at me. The movie, in combination with that lecture, helped clarify and produce some of the views I still have today. Certainly a fleeting sexual experience for just physical gratification, conquest, needed emotional support, or whatever may be very disastrous, psychologically and other ways. But it is not always so. Certainly in this movie, a great deal of luck and perhaps self-deception was involved for this old lady to be able to treasure the experience she had as a girl. But the point is she was able to treasure the experience, even though she never saw or heard from the soldier again. I have met many people who have cherished memories of sexual and other kinds of experiences that meant a great deal to them even though the relationships were not lasting. Relationships at any time can be foreshortened by death, separation, divorce, or whatever. It is not the long lastingness of a relationship that makes treasured moments special at the time (since the duration of the relationship is not then known or guaranteed). It is something else in the relationship, or, as in the movie case, something believed about the relationship.

In the movie case, luck, and perhaps gullibility or naiveté played a large role. But I think that role can be greatly reduced; and people are doing that in numerous ways now. But the numerous ways are all different ways of expressing to their partners what the sex means to them, and knowing also what it means to the partners, before having sex, and judging whether that is acceptable grounds on which to proceed. Now, as my ex-Navy student said, this does not always require discussion (though I think it is often, if not always, even in the case he mentioned, safer that way), "since, when she is waiting at the pier for you to get off the ship and you happen

to be the first sailor whose attention she happens to catch, it is fair to assume certain things about the likely lack of permanence of the situation intended by both sides, especially when a fee is set." Likewise to some extent when people meet in certain ways at a singles bar or particularly at a sex club. (However, the reason I believe discussion is still better, is that though someone may seem in control of their lives and of what they want and may think that sex is it, discussion might show they are not really in control and that sex with you may not be the best thing for either of you at that time and under those circumstances.)

And certainly prostitutes and one night stands or indiscriminate or casual sex is not everyone's cup of tea, and as I mentioned before, I doubt that it could long be a satisfying activity to have uncommitted, eternally new, intentionally only abbreviated, and only sexual, encounters that never develop past the same stages every other such relationship has had. Although I think one night stands can be good and more than just physically satisfying under certain circumstance, I doubt they would be good or fulfilling as a steady diet, and I would think they generally are better in fantasy than they are likely to be in reality. There are never any repercussions, entanglements, or disappointments in fantasy.

But there are often strangers who have been important in our lives in any of a number of ways; why not sexually. I am hardly saying it is a goal to be sought because, apart from the physical risks of pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, it can be a very empty, dissatisfying, disappointing and/or saddening experience. It can also be very lonely, particularly if it makes you want more than you can have or if it makes the other person want more than you are able to give, in terms of a fuller relationship.

(It occurred to me while I was writing about this that there was a difference about the way you felt after watching on tv an episode of *The Lone Ranger* and after watching an episode of *The Fugitive* even though both shows were somewhat the same – a stranger comes into someone's life when they need help, helps them, and then leaves. *Lone Ranger* departures were uplifting and glorious;

Fugitive departures were often melancholy. *The Fugitive* often made you feel that it was really sad for the relationship that had developed to end, that there was much more that it could have developed into. Whereas the Lone Ranger was so one- dimensional and needed for only one specific, and not particularly personal, purpose, that it seemed the "relationships" he developed would not have gone anywhere even had he stayed. He would have had nothing to do and nothing to talk about.)

Although sex could be an enjoyable kind of one-dimensional physical romp, without much interesting discussion or any particularly endearing non-sexual character traits showing, that is rather unlikely, I would think, except in fantasy. In some cases traits would appear that would make the partner seem worth developing a relationship with and in some cases traits would appear that would make sex not seem like such an interesting thing to share with that person. There is also the possibility, and this is what would perhaps make a purely physical affair more or less perfect, that character traits would show which make you like one another just enough for sex or for sex one time, but not enough to pursue the relationship further. I would guess, however, this would be the least likely possibility in general. One-time sex, in particular, seems to me to require possible but rare sets of circumstances to occur for both people to enjoy the time together but not to regret not having even similar future times together, let alone a fuller relationship – circumstances such as under very traumatic conditions, like war, circumstances such as in the movie *Silent Night, Lonely Night*, or possibly in some cases in youth, circumstances where each of you is experimenting with sexual kinds of things and can appreciate sharing a kind of experience together without expecting a permanent kind of bond to develop from it.

Long-term relationships have a special beauty, however, that is greater than just the sum of the individual good times you have shared together. There is a meaningful bond made by the shared memories of many special times; and the more special the time, or

the more times that were special, the more meaningful and special the bond. People who "go way back together", often have a particular affection for each other; they are a part of each others' memories, development, histories, generations, and cultures that people who are strangers and more recent friends simply cannot be. Even in cases where old friends have been separated for many years, there is often a kind of affection at their meeting again that cannot be present between more recent acquaintances, friends, or lovers, no matter how exciting or solid that newer bond. It is also particularly nice to know that genuine affection can endure time and sometimes separation. Also, sometimes one finds out there were some shared experiences that were particularly meaningful to each other, or that became even more meaningful as time proceeded (and perhaps showed them to be more special or more rare than they seemed they would be at the time they happened). It is nice to find out you have helped contribute something special to the life of someone else; and sometimes you can only find that out after much time has elapsed, either because it took them that long to tell you about it or because it took a long time for them to realize how special the experience was, or both.

Further, individual experiences can take on a meaning between people who know each other well that other people are not privy to without at least some sort of explanation. A simple illustration of this is how much more enjoyable certain kinds of television series are in some cases when you know the characters from previous viewing than when you watch an episode of the series for the first time. This is in the kind of series like *Cheers*, *Magnum*, or *Barney Miller*, where personality is consistent and where character development is an essential part of the series. There may be particular remarks or occurrences that take on special meaning because they relate in some particularly poignant, ironic, or funny way to aspects of personality or occurrences brought out in past episodes. In real life, the same thing can occur, where events and occurrences can take on a special meaning to people who realize the significance they have in relationship to past experiences,

personality, and growing older. Although a new relationship can often have an excitement and freshness that an older relationship does not, an older relationship can have a richness of understanding and meaning through interwoven memories that a new friend can only begin to understand if an explanation is first (able to be) given.

Concerning sex and long-term commitment, my own experience was that when I was even beginning college I still worried about as little as holding hands with a girl I was not totally committed to or in love with. Even though I was shy and insecure about being liked and/or loved, I did feel I could meet a girl who might be the same way or who might like me for the wrong reasons; and I was afraid that something like holding hands would unintentionally lead on someone like that.

My first week at college was dismal. Every guy seemed to have a girlfriend but me. Classes had not yet started so there was plenty of time for parties and what they called "mixers", affairs which were awful – guys on one side of the room, girls on the other, only a few people able to "break the ice". Yet outside the dormitories – this was in the early sixties, when dorms were sexually segregated and mixed company was not well received even in the lounges – couples were "making out" like bandits, kissing and petting practically anywhere there was space. Being alone could be terribly lonely.

Then I met a very attractive girl and we had a nice time together. Later we went for a walk, and on that walk we kissed. We kissed rather passionately for about a minute or so till I started feeling very guilty. After all, we had only just met a little earlier that evening. I was not in love with her. I had to talk about it with her. I figured she would think I was really a fool, but luckily she did not. We became friends after that talk. That was gratifying.

For years in college my ideas about relationships did not agree with my biological and psychological feelings and desires. Like Augustine some 1600 years earlier, I often did things I regretted (even though in my case they did not involve intercourse), and I only felt I wanted to be "saved" from myself after the next date,

not during it or before it. At any rate, there were a number of talks with girls and a number of times of soul searching, trying to figure out what was right and what was wrong, and why, in regard to dating and relationships with others. Slowly and painfully I arrived at the ideas I have presented in this book. There were a lot of movie situations reflected on, a lot of relationships and experiences thought about, a lot of debates or discussions with friends in the dorm, a few lectures about sex attended, and even one course on the sociology of marriage taken. Gradually I got to know myself and other people a lot better. I learned better how to verbalize moods and intentions and feelings without having to try to express such thoughts by kissing, or setting seduction scenes, etc. (And as I have tried to make clear in this book, such things cannot express anything anyway.) I learned, for example, I could tell someone I was attracted to them, or just felt friendly, or was in a sexually aroused (horny or lustful) mood but did not think it would be right to (try to) play just for that reason. I learned that quite often horniness was just the result of loneliness and that both could often be resolved with even just a good long telephone conversation with a good (for me, female usually) friend. I gradually became more aware of my own moods and feelings, and those of others, and thus learned what kind of behavior was appropriate in situations which had previously been difficult to deal with. I learned, for example, that I could hold hands for different reasons and express those reasons and desires verbally so as not to have to worry about misleading or later offending someone.

I have tried to express in this book the kinds of distinctions that have been helpful to me in becoming aware of what my wants and desires really were, what I thought was right and what was wrong, and why, what states others might be in, and what behavior was appropriate behavior and the appropriate response in such cases. I hope this book and these distinctions will be helpful to others. I think it can be, though I also think a certain amount of experience and reflection of one's own is important or necessary to know what one really wants oneself, and to really be able to

understand this book. Unfortunately, experience is often a bitter, if not bitter- sweet, teacher. Until you have had romantic attraction, until you have kissed someone you like, until you have kissed someone you do not like all that much but are sexually stimulated by, until you are loved by someone you care about but do not love in return, or until you have had other specific experiences or feelings of the myriad possible regarding relationships, many of the descriptions and points mentioned here will perhaps be just meaningless categories. One can tell others it is easy to find love; but it is difficult to make them believe it until they have done it. One can tell others it is easy to find friends and to be accepted by being nice and by having some interests you can share, etc., but it is difficult to make a person believe it who feels unpopular in school or whatever his company or society happens to be, until he or she finds some companions with whom to share the bonds of friendship – people treating each other well and enjoying each other's interests, abilities, and characters. One can talk about the proper behavior to have in regard to periods of extreme loneliness or lust, or in regard to passionate moments of strong sexual desire for a loved one, but until one has been faced with the power of those moods, the discussion will often not have the impact it otherwise may. Perhaps good movies, good stories, and good poetry, can much better help make intelligible and alive the experiences of others more than an analytic, expository book like this can; but even with them, there will always be that gap, however small, between knowing about yourself from experience and reflection and believing something about yourself in the light of the portrayals of the experiences of others.

It is perhaps unfortunate that a certain amount of wisdom has to be painfully re-learned by each member of the species, if it can be learned at all; but it is fortunate that we can learn and grow from the reflections of our experiences. I think this is tremendously important for people, and I think that is why it seems so reprehensible and repugnant for people to seek to avoid

consciousness of the experience of something or to seek to avoid reflection about that experience through the use of drugs, alcohol, escapist sex, or even mindless imitative socializing.

If there are any proper nonmedicinal uses of drugs or alcohol (Norman Mailer, for example, has written alcohol sometimes helps him nurse a reverie through the night, presumably making it more clear and meaningful to him), it seems to me that escape from experience or escape from the educating reflection on it, is not one of them. As even a fairly trivial example, it seems a pity to me that some people have to get at least somewhat drunk in order just to be able to be friendly at parties or in order to behave in a way they think they should but cannot bring themself to while fully sober. It is a shame to have to lose control in order to be able to do what is right and proper or potentially more enjoyable. Further, memories of pleasant experiences and interesting acquaintances often fade all too soon anyway without making it inevitable that they will fade even by the next morning. Even some unpleasant (but not devastating) experiences, it seems to me, should not be avoided, if reflection on them is necessary for desirable personal growth. But good and satisfying experiences and relationships should not be made any hazier than time and the fallibility of memory will make them anyway. They are rare enough without the need for us to do things which make us oblivious to them, further unable to achieve them, or totally unable to appreciate or remember them. The point of writing this book in fact is to help others (as its contents have helped me) better distinguish and better appreciate the good they have experienced or can experience from relationships, and to give a perspective to relationships that might help more good come about from them than would without it.

Key Takeaways

- This book is an attempt to help readers better reflect on and understand, and in some cases, better appreciate, their own experiences in all relationships, particularly those involving love.
- Our humanity lies in part in our attempts, and our successes, in trying to put our experiences into a meaningful perspective.
- Experience is often a bitter, if not bitter- sweet, teacher.

Key Terms

- A ***fleeting sexual experience*** may be seen as just a fleeting physical gratification.

Chapter Review Questions

- ***Question***: What constitutes an important part of our humanity?

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Glossary

Aberrant Relationship defined by the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "different from the usual or natural type".

Act utilitarianism is the form of utilitarianism that says right acts are those which individually do the greatest good for the greatest number.

The classic ***antagonistic mother-in-law, daughter-in-law conflict*** where each demands mutually exclusive behavior of the son/husband.

Attraction involves wanting to be in contact with another person in some manner or other to some degree, whether in proximity or in communication with them.

Aversion involves to some degree not wanting to be in contact with another person.

Being good "to" someone does not necessarily just mean serving (in the sense of waiting on) them, meeting their needs or desires, pampering them, or giving them things they want, but it may also mean helping them develop their worthwhile potential.

Care and concern are actions that promote or preserve well-being and satisfaction of another, regardless of whether they are accompanied or brought about by care and concern or not.

Commitment demands at least the reasonable attempt

to make one's marriage better by improving the relationship, not by changing partners.

Communication involves a conventional mutually understood (even if imperfectly on various occasions) means of trying to convey ideas or information from one person to another, through some kind of language or symbolism or gestures that have common meaning. Communication is a complex concept, which distinguishes it from sex.

Consequentialist (also called 'teleological') principles and theories of ethics are those which hold that the overall good or harm of consequences are what make acts right or wrong.

The **emotional aspect of relationships** refers to feelings involving the other person, particularly, but not only, feelings of attraction or aversion for another person and will be explained in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Emotional sexual incompatibility are cases where, say, one person wants tender caresses and the other person is not capable of tenderness in touch; or one likes to kiss hard, and the other gently; one likes to hug and cuddle and the other doesn't; one might like to have an important conversation along with touching and making love and is intellectually stimulated by the physical closeness, whereas the other does not like to talk during and just wants to roll over and quietly go to sleep afterward; or where afterward one is very accepting of however it was and the other wants to do a running commentary, or give a verbal critique or grade.

Eros (as defined by Rollo May) "is the binding element par excellence. It is the bridge between being and becoming, and it binds fact and value together. Eros, in short, is the original creative force of Hesiod now transmuted into power which is both 'inside' and 'outside' the person."

Ethical aspect of relationships refers to how good or bad, and how right or wrong for one or both people any given act in a relationship is or how good or bad for either or both the relationship in general is. Chapters 25 and 26 give a detailed explanation about ethics and ethical principles.

Ethical Egoism is the principle that everyone should act in their own best interest.

Ethical hedonism is the principle that everyone should seek their own greatest happiness, satisfaction, pleasure, contentment.

Faithfulness seems to be a question related to ethics more than only to love.

To feel guilty in a relationship is to feel you have intentionally done something wrong with no excuse and to regret having done it.

Feeling fear of being caught may have nothing to do with your feeling you are doing anything wrong nor with remorse, but may have to do simply with fear that others who might discover you would disapprove and invoke a penalty or humiliation for your action.

A ***fleeting sexual experience*** may be seen as just a fleeting physical gratification.

People with ***good "character"*** – something which often requires conscientiousness and some personal sacrifice to earn and to keep – should be appreciated and respected for that character.

A ***half-expectation or half-desire*** is the sort of wanting of something that one might not realize one wants as much as they do or would enjoy as much as they would (or find disappointing or upsetting to be thwarted or unfulfilled) but which is fairly obvious to other people who know them well, or that they themselves after finding the want met or thwarted realizes how important it is or has been to them.

An ***incapacitating type of dependence*** is where one person is unable to function in some sort of normal way without the other's companionship or direction.

It may be easier to view ***intentional actions*** as either ethical actions or potentially ethical actions.

Further evidence for the ***independence of feelings*** from what is enjoyable or unenjoyable and from what is good or bad are the dual phenomena of (1) having different feelings toward people from whom you may get the same satisfactions or dissatisfactions and (2) getting the same kinds of feelings from people who give you satisfactions or dissatisfactions that are different.

Indifference involves not caring whether one is around the other person or not, in any particular form or, for any particular purpose.

Infatuation is a romantic attraction without sufficient

goodness or satisfaction in the relationship to qualify as being love.

Justified self-confidence and, some indifference to ignorant prejudice, can make people be more attractive to others.

Love at first sight may be defined as attraction at first sight. The attraction may be that of love – the same attraction may remain as the relationship develops and bestows its unfolding benefits and blessings – but that cannot be known right away. For the relationship might not hold or develop sufficient joy to warrant being called love; and the attraction, whether it lingers or fades, will only then have been infatuation at first sight.

Love can be said to involve feelings, joys, and good ethical qualities.

Love changing suggests that there are a number of ways to satisfy a person more – (1) doing more things that are satisfying, (2) doing the same (number of) things but in a more satisfying way, or (3) satisfying them in more areas of psychological significance or importance (meaningfulness) to them, (4) satisfying them more deeply in such areas, or (5) any combination of the above, without some equal or greater decrease in one or more of them.

The phrases ***"making love" and "having sexual intercourse"*** are intransitive or at least reciprocal verbs describing a reciprocal or mutual activity.

A ***marriage vow*** is essentially a promise; and promises, just because they are made, bestow an obligation on you

to try to keep them; that is the point of them. Marriage vows do not say "love, honor, and cherish till death do us part, forty thousand miles, or the first sign of problems, whichever comes first".

Meaningful applies to experiences or relationships perceived as profoundly important to one at the time by meeting a felt need or by making a felt difference for the better in a way that is important to the person at that time.

A ***"meshing" or "fit"***...a meshing of qualities. Once two people, whose characteristics so luckily happen to mesh, find each other, changing circumstances may alter the fit.

Non-consequentialist (also called deontological) principles and theories of ethics are those which hold that things other than consequences are what make acts right or wrong.

Personal relationships are those in which acts generally are not based on business or commercial transactions or on the profession of one or more participants.

One may realize that ***present satisfaction*** is due only to temporary circumstances and that when those circumstances change, so to, may the joy the relationship brings.

Psychological Egoism is the view that everyone does act in their own perceived best interest and cannot do otherwise.

Psychological hedonism is the view that everyone does

act to maximize their own greatest happiness and cannot do otherwise.

Professional relationships are those involving acts done as part of at least one person's business, even if one does not charge money for it. It often involves acts requiring a licensed professional.

Reasonably stable environments and circumstances can help relationships remain stable. Reasonably stable environments do not mean ones that are monotonous, stagnating, and unchanging, but instead, refer to environments without drastic changes that would be difficult for almost anyone to cope with and adjust to.

Romantically meaning the general sense of romance, whether it is accompanied by excited passion or not.

Rule utilitarianism is the form of utilitarianism that says right acts are those which conform to the rules that do the greatest good for the greatest number even if the individual act does not do the most good for the most people.

The ***satisfaction/dissatisfaction aspect*** refers to how enjoyable or dissatisfying given times or acts in the relationship are for either or both partners or how satisfying or dissatisfying the relationship is in general for either or both and will be explained in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Sex in the context of this book may refer not just to intercourse, but to any sort of physical contact usually associated with physical/emotional desire: passionate or romantic kissing, holding hands, hugging. In specific

contexts it may be about intercourse or at least genital manipulation/contact of various kinds.

Sexually and emotionally mutually satisfying intercourse frequently tends to require patience and understanding.

Soppy dependence refers to a relationship in which one person's life, goals, work, and happiness depend on another person's, rather than on anything they themselves seek, strive for, or achieve on their own. This can occur from a personal relationship (such as in a marriage), from the goals of an employer or supervisor in a workplace, or from the general culture.

Spontaneity is only an enviable trait when it makes doing what is right also interesting, fun and desirable, not when it makes a mindless fool a slave to impulse. And ethical principles correctly allow spontaneity when they allow the satisfaction of the right desires, stifle the wrong ones, and when they do not require untimely deliberation that itself destroys the desires when they arise – untimely deliberation that should have been done previously.

STD is the accepted abbreviation for sexually transmitted diseases.

Feelings, emotions, attractions are not necessarily ***"subtractive"*** – that is, having some for one person does not take away from some finite amount of them so that you have less available for others.

A ***"supererogatory" or "saintly" or "beyond the call of duty" act*** if, it is a right act; but is not a right act if it can

be called required or obligatory or a duty or moral obligation. Such an act might be one of sacrifice like throwing oneself on a grenade to save one's friends. It might be one of giving an exceedingly large charitable donation.

Unrequited love is being loved by those who excite no passion in you.

Utilitarianism is the principle that all acts should do what causes the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Sometimes what a person means by ***wanting to be loved*** is that they want to be liked, appreciated, and respected, for their basic values, principles, ideals, goals, and the things they believe in and the way they behave in general even though they may not be actively pursuing any of those goals or values at a particular time.

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